Buscraft gone
Bodybuilder is in liquidation

Bigger Mini
Marshall Capital unveiled

CBW
Coach and Bus Week
The PSV industry's news weekly • 3 May 1997 • Issue 267

★ Special pull-out emissions guide ★

Merry men

Robin Hood sales go to SJ Carlton

Bennett boom
Newbury op plans expansion

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CBW Coach and Bus Week

It is up to you to champion the cause

BY the time you read this, Britons will have elected their choice of Government for the next term of office.

Whichever choice the voters make, they will not be aiming at changing their minds in five years' time. They will, we hope, be making a statement about their ideals - their unshakeable beliefs which, as we all know, are all too easily shaken.

Sadly, the same is true of Governments. Under the Conservatives, with 18 years' unbroken run, we have had almost an equal number of Secretaries of State for Transport. It is as if Government policy for a transport system has been a series of five-year plans, each run in isolation. We have no reason to expect greater bravado from any party, if their manifestos are to be taken at face value.

If anyone is going to champion the cause of the enablement of public transport it is yourselves, at local level, fighting local issues. And it is in this direction that the coach and bus industry representatives must increasingly devote their resources on our behalf. The gains in lobbying at central Government level must surely be measured in inches, not strides.

■ ARE you ready for entry into this year's *Coach Industry Awards?*

The application form was wrapped around the outside of your 19 April issue and, if you've lost it, there will be another copy in next week's *CBW* or you can drop a line to us by fax on 01733 467154. We will then send you a step-by-step guide to making your entry, explaining the judging criteria. Some of you will stop there - perhaps believing that you haven't a chance.

But the determined will press ahead, taking time and trouble to tell their company's entire story to our panel of coaching experts.

If you don't enter you will not be shortlisted and you certainly will not win.

In the final round, you may be asked some searching questions about your business. We make no apology for the commitment we demand. We believe the rewards more than justify the effort.

Now, have you filled in that form yet?

Mike Morgan, Editor

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events

10 May: 50th anniversary celebration of first post-war RT buses. Historic RT buses will run from Leyton Garage to the London Transport Museum in Covent Garden. Details from Ken Kelling on 0171 379 6344

24-25 May: AEC Society 14th Annual Road Run and Rally, Wollaton Park, Nottingham. Details on 01509 212672

1 June: Valley Lines Festival of Transport, and Bus & Coach Wales, Barry Island, Vale of Glamorgan. Details from Glyn Bowen, on 01443 693087

1-6 June: 52nd UITP Congress, Stuttgart, Germany, includes Worldwide Exhibition of Public Transport running parallel from 2-5 June. Details on 32 2 673 61 00 or fax 32 2 660 10 72

12 June: Buses Worldwide meeting, Fred Tallant Hall, 153 Drummond Street, London NW1, 7pm. Details from Ian Johnston, 3 Cypress Drive, Fleet, Hants GU13 9HE

22 June: 2nd Classic AutoMotion historic vehicle exhibition, Transport Research Laboratory, Crowthorne, Berks. Details from W. Ackroyd, 1 Hawthorn Road, Send, Ripley, Surrey GU23 6LH

11-13 July: Mobility Roadshow, Transport Research Institute, Crowthorne, Berkshire. Details from Sally Dunsford or Jan Gething on 01344 770463 or 0171 276 5252

1-5 September: 25th European Transport Forum Annual Meeting, Brunel University, Uxbridge, London. Details and full copies of call for papers on 0181 741 5993, fax 0181 741 5993

21 September: Titan Day, Amberley Museum, West Sussex. Exhibitors contact Alan Lambert, 7 Nursery Close, Emsworth, Hants P10 7SP

▼ Coach

Silver lining

Bennetts reaches for the skies

by Mark Williams

AN ambitious growth plan, air tour sales, and new livery are signs of the times at Newbury-based Bennetts Coaches.

Md Dick Bennett is planning a 26 per cent increase in tour turnover this season, after a 1996 season which saw an average vehicle loading of 44 people, and a remarkable situation in which only one booked tour was cancelled from a portfolio which includes UK and Continental coach tours and ATOL-licensed air holidays.

"Since we now own an air tour company, the time was right to have a separate identity for our holiday division," said Mr Bennett. Its arrival has been heralded with the delivery of a Plaxton Premiere and two, new 49-seat front-line vehicles... Mr Bennett's favoured Bovas. The Premiere 320 is air conditioned but with 53-seat configuration for UK tours. The Bova Futuras have toilet and video, and will service Continental work as well as providing transfers for air tours, which are door-to-door packages.

"The original livery has fronted Bennetts for 10 years, and I felt it was time to enhance the product, while also avoiding the stigma of sending people on holiday on 'the school bus'," said Mr Bennett, whose contracts now underpin the off season and enable him to retain more full-time drivers.

■ See Deals pages 24&25

▼ Coach

Carlton gets RH2000

SJ CARLTON is sole distributor for Robin Hood's mould-breaking RH2000 midicoach.

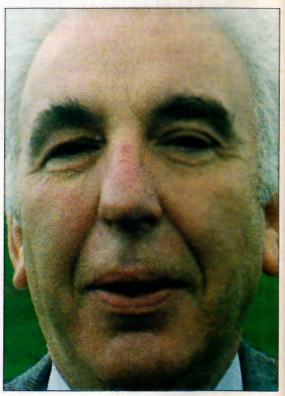
The Rotherham dealership added the luxury vehicle - based on Mercedes-Benz' Vario - shortly after the acquisition of Robin Hood Vehicle Industries by Buddens Coaches. And, according to SJ Carlton md Stuart Johnson, it's a natural partnership.

RH2000 at Brighton...now at Rotherham dealer

"I've known Simon Budden for a very long time," said Mr Johnson. "He has a reputation for delivering high-quality coach services, and he runs these midicoaches himself.

"The RH2000 was the ideal addition to our range, especially as it doesn't clash with any Neoplan product. It will give us a vehicle range from 24 to 79 seats."

The RH2000 and its lower-budget sister coach the RH Century both feature reclining seats, plug door and other executive features, but the RH2000 also has air conditioning as standard. The midicoaches retail at between £75,000 and £85,000 depending on specification.



Johnson: 'ideal addition'

The dealership has ordered an example of both models for demonstrators, and three others for immediate, stock build. Sales are being handled by the coach sales team under Bill Povey.

● ● ● *inside TRANSIT this week* ● ● ● *inside TRANSIT this week* ● ● ● *in*

News

Are we about to see a battle of the giants? Certainly, FirstBus is reacting to Stagecoach's competitive strike in Glasgow with services of its own. Stagecoach Scotland managing director, Neil Renilson, is being typically robust... and planning further registrations. Where will it all end?

Go-Ahead continues to make shrewd acquisitions that fit in well with its existing bus and rail portfolio. But, as Brighton Transport is absorbed in the south, limiting MMC undertakings are signed in the north. Another cloud on Go-Ahead's horizon could be Metrobus of Orpington - it's just taken a 30 per cent stake in LeisureLink (Brighton).

FirstBus is leading the way on quality partnerships. Britain's biggest operator is playing a prominent part in the formation of a limited company in Manchester - with local authority partners - and is set to complete a partnership in the Potteries which will unlock an £8million investment.

FirstBus is not hanging around on rail either. It's pushing ahead with a £9.25 million investment pro-

New livery on this Plaxton Premiere signals Newbury operator's expansion into air tours

▼ Bus

Go-Ahead bids for Blue Bus

BRIGHTON Transport may be absorbed into Go-Ahead's Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach if a £5.76 million bid is accepted by shareholders.

The directors are to recommend that the management-employee owned company accepts Go-Ahead's offer at an extraordinary meeting on 20 May: "Brighton & Hove and Brighton Transport have a long-established history of working together," said Brighton & Hove md Roger French.

■ Full story in Transit, this week.

▼ Coach and Bus

Buscraft in liquidation

CONVERSION specialist and builder of the Impala midicoach, Buscraft Ltd, has been put into voluntary liquidation by its board.

The doors of the Merseyside company closed on 21 April.

Buscraft was owned by a South African, Mr Bredenkamp, and run by Derek Noble.

The Impala was based on a Mercedes-Benz 814L chassis - longer than the normal PSV choice, and with rear air suspension fitted for a horsebox derivative. The coach was one of only a few 33 seaters on the market.

The liquidator, David Rowlands of Grant Thornton in Liverpool, said the creditors' meeting was due to take place yesterday, Friday 2 May, shortly after *CBW* went to press.

▼ Bus

Provincial winners

TWO bus drivers from opposite ends of the UK picked up the National Federation of Bus Users/Optare awards (*CBW*, 19 April).

Driver of the Year Alex Cockburn (right) received 55 passenger nominations from the Largs area, where he is the regular driver on Stagecoach Western Scottish route 31 and runner-up was Tony Trigg (left) of Newport Transport.

The awards were presented by joint sponsor Optare.

▼ Coach and Bus

Dennis parent sees turnover soar

DENNIS Specialist Vehicles' parent Trinity Holdings plc has announced turnover up 26 per cent and profit up nine per cent.

Trinity's sales reached £262.1 million in the 12 months ending 31 January, against last year's £208.1 million. Gross profit was £70.7 million (£55 million, 1995/96) and operating profit £19 million (£16.9 million).

Orders for Dennis' lowfloor double deck, the Trident, have already reached 241 chassis, with production expected to produce the first examples in May. A total of £4 million is being invested in the Guildford site.

de TRANSIT this week ● ● ● inside TRANSIT this week ● ● ● inside TRANSIT this week ● ● ●

gramme on Great Eastern.

Elsewhere on the UK's rejuvenated rail network, National Express is to replace the entire fleet of Gatwick Express in an innovative deal with GEC Alsthom Metro-Cammell. And Stagecoach has teamed up with Sea Containers to offer bus/rail ticketing on GNER services.

News Extra

Is it going to be third time lucky for Harry Stewart? First there was Tyne & Wear Omnibuses, then Welcome Passenger Services. Now it's make way for HMB Buses...and an intriguing sponsorship deal with Virgin. Stewart tells all to *Transit* this week.

Feature

The bus industry is on the threshold of a new era of prosperity. Don't let franchising turn the clock back, argues professor John Hibbs.

Analysis

Just before the deal with Shearings is signed, we run the calculator over Wallace Arnold. In a low margin business, 4.4 per cent for the Leisure Division looks good - but that's down on 1995. Full profit and loss and segmental analysis this week.

Plus

Two pages of jobs and tenders and much, much more. What are you waiting for? Fill out the subscription form on the inside back cover of this issue NOW and make sure of your own copy, delivered first class to YOU each fortnight.

In brief

Winners' day

WINNERS of the bus and Coach Glazing Challenge at the Expo Coach '96 exhibition recently enjoyed their winning day out at Donington race circuit with Plaxton Parts & Service md Rod May. The winners were Paul Williams (Flights Coach Travel), Alan Townsend (County Bus) and Ross Keenan (Keenan Coach Travel).

Video star

CBW news editor Mark Williams is featured in a DAF Bus video entitled 'DAF LPG engines: low environmental impact plus top performance'. Mr Williams interviewed senior DAF personnel and operators of LPG buses in Holland. Read more about LPG and alternative fuels in our special supplement in this week's *CBW*.

Routes kept

STAGECOACH Selkent has retained the contracts to operate routes 54 and 75 for a further five years on a net-cost contract basis. New double-deck buses were introduced to both routes when the new contracts started on 26 April.

Trips increase

THE number of trips provided for disabled people by ring-and-ride charity West Midlands Special Needs Transport (WMSNT) increased by 9.5 per cent in the year ended 31 March 1997. WMSNT believes the availability of more accessible transport such as lowfloor buses will help cater for some of the increasing demand from disabled people but says most of its users can't reach bus stops and rely on a door-to-door service.

Contract win

LONDON Central has been awarded the contract to operate route 35, and new Night Bus route N35 for five years on a net cost basis. New double-deck buses will be introduced to the route gradually.

Body has commonality with Marshall Mini

▼ Bus

Marshall on Dart SLF is just Capital

First are for CentreWest and IoM

by Mike Morgan

INTRODUCED at the NEC last October and put into production earlier this year, the new Marshall Bus body for Dennis Dart SLF chassis has made its public debut with first vehicles for CentreWest and Isle of Man Transport.

Christened the Capital, the new body owes more to the lowfloor Marshall Mini than the former Carlyle Dartline style which Marshall Bus developed for standard Dart and Volvo B6. Fully jig-welded stainless steel body structure is interphased with chassis members. Front and rear frame is finished in multi-section GRP with two-piece curved windscreen interchangeable with other Marshall Bus models.

One-piece GRP roof panel, aluminium bay-size side panels and GRP skirt panels complete the commonality in styling with the Marshall Mini, though bay sizes differ.

The Capital is available on the three Dart SLF chassis currently available giving the following maximum seating: 35 on 9.4 metre; 39 on 10.2 metre; 43 on 10.8 metre. Marshall business director Mike Winter described the body price as "competitive."

Interior features the option of moquette-covered roof centre and GRP coving with integrated lighting units. Heating is either Sütrak blowers mounted in the coving or floor-mounted radiator-type.

CentreWest is taking 41 with 9.4-metre bodies for its Ealing Buses network which starts at the end of this month, while Isle of Man Transport is revamping services and has selected 10.8-metre Capitals to replace one third of its fleet over the coming months.

Taking over in Ealing

MARSHALL-bodied buses are taking over on London Transport Buses tender routes in the Ealing area when CentreWest puts 41 lowfloor Darts and 16 Marshall Minis on the Ealing Buses network.

Ordered before Centre West was taken over by FirstBus, the Darts feature Marshall Bus' latest Capital styling on the 9.4-metre vehicles, and the Minis will be the revamped version of the trail-blazing 8.5-metre lowfloor bus which uses Marshall's own stainless steel chassis and four-cylinder Cummins B-series engine.

CentreWest's Capitals have soft trimmed interior with moquette-covered central roof and moquette-trimmed seats for 31 passengers with space for 21 standees. Interior illumination is with Marshall-designed cove lighting suitable for advertising panels. Unladen weight is 6550 kg.

CentreWest ordered before FirstBus takeover

Lowfloors replacing third of IoM's fleet

Capital SLFs designed to attract passengers

SERVICES on the Isle of Man are to be revamped and one third of the island's fleet replaced with new lowfloor buses.

Twenty five vehicles are being supplied in May and June, replacing Leyland Nationals and ex-Portsmouth Atlanteans.

They are the first Marshall bodies supplied to Isle of Man Transport and they feature the latest Capital body styling on 10.8-metre overall length Dennis Dart SLF chassis. The interior is fully hard-trimmed but generous legroom and individual moquette seats are specified. Transport executive Robert Smith said the heavy investment in new vehicles was geared to making bus travel more attractive to the car-orientated Isle of Man residents.

Seating is for 37 plus standee space for 20 and wheelchair position where a total of six tip-up seats are located - three nearside and three offside.

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Ready for battle: Harry Stewart and his MetroRiders all set for action

▼ Bus

HMBs MetroRiders go zebra style

TYNESIDE'S latest bus operator, HMB Buses, has liveried these MetroRiders in this striking Newcastle-inspired paint scheme to promote Virgin Radio.

The quartet of midibuses will be singing Virgin's tune via on-board radios, while the Tune Army Buses with their obvious allusion to the premiership football team will be up against stiff competition from Stagecoach Busways' economy-brand Magic Buses (*CBW*, 19 April).

Harry Stewart, who is masterminding the 22-vehicle fleet, is offering quality for his passengers and his drivers.

● **Find out why it's third time around for HMB Buses in this week's Transit - out now**

▼ Bus

PMT wins

And promises £8 million spend in

by Mark Williams

FIRSTBUS subsidiary PMT has won an Investors In People award, and has promised an £8 million spend on buses within the next three years.

The Stoke-on-Trent-based company is to take 44 new vehicles in the next 12 months, most of which will be working in the North Staffordshire area.

PMT will also be signing a formal partnership with local authorities to develop two corridors with lowfloors and matching bus stop kerbs.

This year, it is planning to develop its bus identification system, which follows the progress of vehicles along their routes, to integrate the system with the council's Advanced Transport Telematics traffic controls, due to be installed soon.

To achieve its IiP, the operator has put more than 80 per cent of its drivers through National Vocational Qualification level 2, and supervisors are studying level 3. Much of its advice has come from Staffordshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC).

"Staff from all areas at the company are

▼ Coach and Bus

Third and final warning for Truronian

TRURONIAN of Cornwall has received a third and final warning from deputy traffic commissioner John Robins over defective vehicles.

Between June 1996 and January 1997, 10 of Truronian's oldest vehicles collected prohibitions, DoT examiner David Treloar told a Western Traffic Area public inquiry at Truro.

Loose wheelnuts, oil and fuel leaks led to seven vehicles being given immediate prohibitions, and three more delayed prohibitions.

Mr Robins said he had the power to revoke, suspend or alter the conditions of Truronian's licence but, given the company's assurance through solicitor Geoffrey Jones, that the three directors were determined to improve maintenance and safety checks, would opt for a final warning.

Truronian - which now runs a fleet of ground-breaking lowfloors across the county - claimed it had been let down by staff who had missed faults during maintenance and had not performed safety checks.

■ **Legal News, pages 16&17**

Bambino from Spain first seen at Maastricht

Regional Round-up+++Regional Round-up+++Regional Rou

▼ Scotland

Firstbus chair

FIRSTBUS is sponsoring a new academic chair at Aberdeen's The Robert Gordon University.

The Chair in Transport Management will promote and co-ordinate research activities in transport within the university, liaise with national and local transport bodies, and work with FirstBus on its research projects.

"We are delighted to have the opportunity to work with The Robert Gordon University, and to demonstrate our long-term commitment to raising the profile, and importance, of transport in the local community," said FirstBus chief executive Moir Lockhead.

▼ Yorkshire

Joint express

CALDERLINE and Kingfisher, subsidiaries of FirstBus, have teamed up for a new joint express bus service linking Halifax and Huddersfield.

SwiftLink trims 10 minutes off the standard 35-minute bus journey between the two towns, on a return fare of £2.

▼ Aberdeen

P&R success

PARK-and-ride services in Aberdeen attracted 11 per cent more passengers last Christmas compared to the previous year.

In all, 15,000 cars were parked at the three sites, at Bridge of Don, Woodhill House and Altens. The seven-week scheme allowed parking and bus transfer for £1.50 a day each weekend, with bus frequency at 10 minutes.

The year-round park and ride at Bridge of Don and Woodhill House also experienced an improvement.

▼ Nottinghamshire

Going for it

SKILLS Motor Coaches is going for a local newspaper's Company of the Year Award.

The Radford-based company has been filling the *Nottingham Evening Post* with stories of its expansion, training schemes and new vehicles this Spring, and is now a contender for the title.

▼ Tyne and Wear

Driver check

GO-AHEAD North-East has joined DriveCare's freephone scheme to monitor its drivers' perfor-

Investors in People

next three years

involved in planning their own future training and making sure it meets their needs," said engineering director Tony Marsh. "Better staff means a better service to customers."

And Staffordshire TEC chief executive Richard Ward repaid the compliment.

"I have been impressed with PMT's attitude to its people, which goes beyond a commitment to develop all employees to meet business objectives. PMT believes that the untapped and developed skills of its entire workforce are major assets," he said.

Tony Marsh (left): 'better staff means better service for our customers'

▼ Minibus

Transit-based mini on way to UK

A SMALL Transit-based mini which first caught the eye of British operators at Autobus RAI 96 held at Maastricht is heading for the United Kingdom.

Built by Ferque in Spain but imported into the low countries by Omnibus Trading of Arnhem, the aptly-named Bambino had 13 seats and electric plug door when displayed at the Maastricht show (*CBW*, 2 November). However, the first British operator to place an order is long-haul holiday specialist, Titan of Redhill, Surrey, and it has specified eight Vogel coach seats and large boot on the 15 air-conditioned Bambinos it is expecting for August/September delivery.

Titan will be using the vehicles on airport transfers for clients booked on its tours to the States/Australia.

Paul Robson of Titan said the Bambino is based on 100 PS-powered Transit 190.

The top half of the body is replaced by a new high-roof fabrication which incorporates full-height flush-glazed windows.

▼ Coach and Bus

Chance to air your views

COACH and bus operators are being given the chance to air their views of enforcement direct to the authorities this June.

The Confederation of Passenger Transport's members-only Enforcement for Quality conference, on 25 June, features Vehicle Inspectorate chief executive Ron Oliver, senior traffic commissioner Michael Betts, Association of Chief Police Officers' Geoffrey Markham, plus speakers from the Government, Trading Standards and the Health & Safety Executive.

"We would very much like operators to bring facts with them to the conference, and to take part in the discussion," said CPT's Steve Rooney.

Tickets are £75 including VAT and lunch, direct from the CPT, at Imperial House, 15-19 Kingsway, London WC2B 6UN.

d-up+++Regional Round-up+++Regional Round-up+++Regional

mance. Buses will carry the 'How Am I Driving?' sticker with its hotline number, encouraging motorists and others to dial in both the brickbats and the bouquets. According to DriveCare, membership of the scheme typically reduces accidents by 20 per cent.

"It's another weapon in our arsenal," said depot manager Richard Startup (left). "Some people might be reluctant to phone a bus company direct."

▼ West Midlands

Vandalised

WEST Midlands coach operator Kev's Travel may be forced to close by vandals, whose latest crime was to smash a coach screen.

The six-vehicle Bilston operator had a succession of window breakages last year, and is now saying that, when schools contracts come up for renewal in August, it will be examining its viability.

▼ Dorset

Express ends

A DORCHESTER Coachways express service linking the Dorset towns of Verwood, Ringwood and Three-Legged Cross to London ended yesterday (2 May).

The company says the new coaches it has bought for the service demand high loadings and optimal journey time, and that diverting to the towns - to pick up between two and four passengers daily - is no longer economic.

"At the end of the day, we're a commercial operation," said Dorchester Coachways' md Henry Frier.

Part of the group: Robinson's sister company, Holdsworth, is inspiration for separate brochure...and livery

▼ Coach

Premieres join basic price tours

Holdsworth/Robinsons package

by Mike Morgan

ROBINSONS of Great Harwood, Lancashire has taken delivery of its 1997 intake of Plaxton Premiere 350 bodied Volvo B10Ms fitted with ZF automatic gearboxes.

Two are painted in a blue Holdsworth livery as the company launches a package of 'basic price' tours. David Lord, Robinsons managing director, said: "We have introduced a second brochure under the Holdsworth name which is 'direct sell', utilising only the group's own hotels. "It is a basic price brochure and all meals en route are charged extra so customers can book as much or as little as they like. We hope this will be attractive to a much wider clientele." Robinsons is part of the Holdsworth group based in Halifax. Mr Lord said: "The sister company Holdsworth Hotels has just purchased the three-star Abbey Lawn in Torquay to add to our other five south-coast hotels, plus one in Tenby."

The new intake of coaches brings the total number of B10Ms in the fleet to 10 as Robinsons moves more towards Volvo than the previously preferred DAF MB230s.

Customer liaison officers lend a helping hand

▼ Bus

Customer carers improve service

CUSTOMER liaison officers will be a familiar sight at bus stops on the routes running from Dunstable and Luton town centres as part of The Shires' efforts to improve service to its customers.

Karen Dunkely, 38, and Martin Robinson, 30, will be available in the town centres to answer customer queries about timetabling, traffic congestion and delays, and to provide an on-the-spot point of contact between the customer and the bus company.

▼ Minibus

New backer for Omni

OMNI production has been rescued by the son of the man who backed Omni Coach and Omni Bus but the new company, FTL Omni, plans to build chassis for bodybuilders rather than complete vehicles.

John Davies, son of Fred Davies, has purchased the rights to the front-wheel-drive chassis from the receiver.

Chassis production is expected to start in the Summer and an electric hybrid could be developed.

Meanwhile, FTL Omni is now supplying spare parts.

● **Contact Mr Davies on 01388 775115.**

▼ Bus

Postbus party

THE Royal Mail's Postbus service has celebrated 25 years' of existence with a school party on the Isle of Skye.

The Postbus service is a lifeline for many rural communities in the north of Scotland. The network now includes 142 routes through the province.

▼ Bus

Partnership pays off

THE Rural Development Commission, based in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, has entered into a partnership with Ipswich Buses, trading as Suffolkbus, to provide a bus service from Wetheringsett to Ipswich.

The service operates into Ipswich at 7.20am and returns at 5.45pm. Ipswich Buses managing director Malcolm Robson said the service would have been cancelled if the Rural Development Commission had not given its support. He hopes it will become commercial.

▼ Bus

Boy dies in school bus horror

A TWELVE-year-old boy was killed in West Lothian as he ran after his school bus.

The double-deck was leaving the school, in Livingston, when the youngster - who has not been named - ran after it, tripped and fell beneath the wheels. The bus driver was afterwards treated for shock.

The police and local education authority are to investigate the incident.

CBW

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▼ Europe

Great days for Greatdays

GREATDAYS, the Altrincham-based wholesaler, checked in for a hat trick of wins when it was awarded the 1996 Top Wholesaler Award from Accor Hotels.

The award was for the volume of group travel reservations into Accor hotels across central Europe. Sales director Paul Beaumont is pictured receiving the award from Erica Dryden (left), director of sales UK for Accor Hotels, and Donna Hope, of Accor Hotels. Greatdays also won the award in 1994 and 1995.

This year has seen Greatdays continue its expansion into all aspects of the tourism and leisure market. It recently purchased FIT operator European Travelhouse from the collapsed Rainbow Holiday Group and further developments will include a conference and incentive department and an overseas sales office.

▼ UK

Shearings

Wallace Arnold: end

by William Golden

SHEARINGS Holidays expects to successfully complete its bid for Wallace Arnold by the end of the month, now it has been given the green light by the Office of Fair Trading (*CBW*, 26 April).

The OFT's decision not to refer it to the MMC came as no great surprise because the merger would give the two companies no more than 16 per cent of the total coach tourism market. Also, the industry is a regional, not a national, business, so the transaction does not qualify for investigation under the merger provisions of the Fair Trading Act 1973. Staff at Wal-

▼ Europe

Leger offering short

SHORT breaks by air to Prague are being offered on a choice of dates in July and August by Leger Holidays.

Prices range from £349 to £385 per person and include return scheduled flights from Stansted, Manchester or Heathrow; four-nights' bed and breakfast in a three-star hotel;

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deal near

of May takeover?

lace Arnold, in Leeds, are still opposed to the £30 million deal, despite reassurances from John Slatcher, md of Shearings Group, that there would be no widespread job losses and the Wallace Arnold brand would be maintained and developed.

Unconvinced, they have mounted a strong protest campaign, claiming that up to 1,000 jobs would be lost and the Wallace Arnold brand name would disappear.

But the campaign appears to be fired by emotion rather than logic, as it would make absolutely no commercial sense for Shearings to take over Wallace Arnold and then shut it down.

breaks to Prague

transfers and the services of a tour manager.

Accommodation is based on a sharing a twin room.

The packages also include a free, full-day excursion to the spa towns of Karlovy Vary and Mariembad, in Western Bohemia, and a guided sightseeing tour of Prague.

In the driving seat: promoting tours to Kent are David Hughes (front), Chris Walters (standing), manager of the Jarvis Great Danes Hotel, and Jean-Michel Inglis

▼ Europe

New Dover record

TRAFFIC through the Port of Dover is running at record levels, with figures for the first three months of the year showing the number of passengers increased by 41 per cent to nearly four million, compared to 1996.

Dover continues to enjoy the lion's share of the coach market, with throughput rising 26 per cent to 26,000 vehicles. The biggest growth was in the freight sector, which rose 70 per cent to 413,000 vehicles. The record for a single day was broken on four occasions and now stands at 6,764, meaning a lorry arrives or departs on average every 13 seconds.

▼ UK

Tour ops get gen on Kent

MORE than 120 tour operators from Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands got the inside story on Kent on a three-day fam trip organised by Kent Tourism and P&O European Ferries.

The programme included a workshop at the Jarvis Great Danes Hotel; visits to Leeds Castle and Dover Castle; and separate trips to the areas promoted as the Heart of Kent, Discover East Kent, and Maritime Kent. David Hughes, manager of Kent Tourism, said: "Overseas tours operators are vital to our efforts to sell Kent as a tourism destination."

P&O passenger sales and marketing manager Jean-Michel Inglis said: "Working alongside Kent Tourism and the county's attractions allows us to provide an unbeatable travel and holiday package for overseas visitors." CBW

Eurowatch

WEATHER

City	Average temperature last week	City	Average temperature last week
Amsterdam	14C/57F	Madrid	16C/61F
Athens	20C/68F	Oslo	3F/37F
Berlin	16C/61F	Paris	17C/63F
Brussels	16C/61F	Rome	15C/59F
Dublin	13C/55F	Stockholm	5C/41F
Lisbon	17C/63F	Vienna	13C/55F
Luxembourg	14C/57F	Zurich	17/63F

DIESEL PRICES

AA Out and About with AA Roadwatch

Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling	Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling
Austria	0.50	Luxembourg	0.40
Belgium	0.48	Netherlands	0.48
Eire	0.55	Norway	0.67
France	0.49	Portugal	0.42
Germany	0.48	Spain	0.43
Greece	0.40	Sweden	0.54
Italy	0.55	Switzerland	0.55

HOLIDAY POUND

Country	Currency exchange rate	Country	Currency exchange rate
Austria	19.08 Sch/£	Italy	2,717 Lire/£
Belgium	55.95 BFr/£	Netherlands	3.039 Gld/£
Denmark	10.40 K/£	Norway	11.18 NKr/£
Eire	1.02 Punt/£	Portugal	271.50 Es/£
France	9.12 F/£	Spain	227 Pta/£
Germany	2.71 DM/£	Sweden	12.20 SKr/£
Greece	433 D/£	Switzerland	2.3150 SFr/£

For all your tourism and travel ideas see *Coach Tours & Excursions*. 01733 467048 COACH

Private roads at ports could be considered to be open to the public and so subject to the Road Traffic Act 1988

Don't land up in the dock

Our legal news writer Michael Jewell (right) looks at recent rulings and their implications

A RECENT ruling by a crown court judge that private dock roads at Holyhead Docks are roads that are "open to the public" because Holyhead is a ferry port has important implications for operators and their drivers who take their coaches abroad.

Northern Irish lorry driver John McGill had appealed to Caernarfon Crown Court against his conviction on a drinking and driving offence committed on a private dock road, and his resultant disqualification from driving.

The facts were that McGill had been drinking on the ferry on its passage from Ireland.

He was stopped by police some 50 yards after driving off the ferry at 1.30am and breathalysed.

Dismissing the appeal against conviction, Judge Derek Halbert pointed out that the High Court, in the case of Coulman, had held that passengers going out on a ferry were not "the public" as they required a ticket, but passengers who were disembarking from the ferry were "the public" as they did not require a ticket.

In quashing McGill's disqualification from driving, Judge Halbert warned that drivers using ferries, who commit offences such as drinking and driving, can no longer say that they were unaware that the private dock roads are roads that are "open to the public".

In the present case he accepted that McGill had not believed that he was laying himself open to a criminal offence by taking his lorry off the ferry for a very short distance to a place in the dock area where he could complete his daily rest period, having interrupted it to disembark.

He also accepted that was something that the driver of an accompanied lorry was required to do himself.

However, for the future no-one else could be under the same misapprehension.

All offences such as drink driving, careless driving, insecure loads, speeding and similar offences prosecuted under the Road Traffic Act 1988 are committed on roads to which the public have access.

It now seems, according to the courts, the position is that the public has access to dock roads and quays if vehicles disembark and travel across them, even though traffic embarking can only gain access by permission and a ticket. In some docks, such as Felixstowe, for example, there is a private Act of Parliament which makes such areas subject to the Road Traffic Act..

Others, such as Holyhead, which have developed over recent years, may depend upon the dock road being one which physically has the same characteristics of a road, such as metalling, lighting, road marking, etc, to which the 'public', in the very limited sense of disembarking drivers and passengers laid down by the High Court in the case of Coulman, has access.

The position of Scotland, which has a separate legal system and is a 'foreign' jurisdiction for this purpose may be different again as, indeed, will be Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The tachograph regulations use different wording, it being said they apply to "driving on roads open to the public" and it may yet have to be decided by the European Court whether the use of tachographs and the observance of the EC drivers' hours provisions apply to those drivers whose only driving is on the dock roads and quaysides.

The words "open to the public" might well be held to require access as of right or at least by some general permission applying to cars and coaches etc and pedestrians.

That would be different from the very limited access as defined in the Coulman case.

The lessons to be learned are that no-one should risk committing an offence in the probably mistaken belief he or she is on private property and, therefore, not committing an illegal act. CBW

SJ CARLTON
A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

1990 (G) VOLVO B10M MKIII VAN HOOL ALIZEE
53 reclining seats, ZF 6-speed S690 manual gearbox, Telma, ABS, air suspension with front kneel facility and ferry lift, re-trimmed in grey/red Graffiti moquette, courier seat, air opened front left hand plug entrance door, 1/2 rear emergency exit door to right hand side, twin roof vents, double glazed, blinds/curtains, radio/PA system, repainted white. *(Ref: V/372/C/F)*

1990 (G) VOLVO B10 VAN HOOL ALIZEE
49 reclining seats, 6 speed ZF gearbox, double glazed, centre continental door, drivers bunk, auxiliary heater, power door, toilet, radio/PA, TV/video, drinks, fridge, livery grey/silver, MoT 10.04.98.*(Ref: V/402/C)*

1992 (J) SCANIA K93CR/273 PLAXTON PREMIERE 3200

53 seats, radio/PA cassette, double glazed, blinds to side windows, (lap type) seat belts. Choice
Ref: S/357/C.

1986 (C) VOLVO B10M DUPLE 320
53 seats, 6-speed ZF gearbox, power door, radio, livery cream and blue, MoT 31.03.98, *(Ref: V/404/C)*

1984 (PP) VOLVO B10M PLAXTON
53 reclining seats, 6 speed ZF gearbox, double glazed, centre continental door, power door, demountable toilet, livery is blue two tone, MoT 30.10.97. *(Ref: V/397/C)*

1990 (G) LEYLAND PLAXTON TIGER 3200

50 reclining seats, 6 speed ZF gearbox, double glazed, toilet, radio/PA system, drinks, servery, white livery.
Ref: L/389/C

1991 (H) DAF SB2300 DUPLE
59 seats, 6 speed ZF splitter gearbox, double glazed, power door, radio/PA system, livery blue/white, MoT 31.03.98. *(Ref: V399L)*

1992 (J) SETRA TORNADO 215HD
MAN engine, ZF 7-speed gearbox, 49 reclining seats and courier seat, sunken centre toilet, 2 TV monitors and video, radio/PA system, repainted white and re-trimmed, air conditioning.*(Ref: S/227/C)*

1990 (G) TOYOTA OPTIMO II CAETANO
18 seats plus courier, manual gearbox, power door, radio/PA/cassette, livery blue, seat belts fitted, MoT 17.07.97. *(Ref: T/330/C)*

1991 (H) VOLVO B10M MKIII VAN HOOL ALIZEE

52 seats + crew seat, centre sunken toilet, servery, fridge, continental door, radio/PA/cassette, double glazed, blinds to sidewindows, (lap type) seat belts. Choice

1989 (F/G) LEYLAND TIGER
55 seats + 24 standing, livery white, Alexander Belfast service bus body, Cummins L10, ZF automatic gearbox. Choice. *(Ref: L1276/C)*

1984 (PP) LEYLAND PLAXTON TIGER 3200
48 reclining seats, semi-automatic gearbox, power door, toilet, radio/PA system, TV, drinks servery, white livery, MoT 17.01.98. *(Ref: L/388/C)*

1992 (J) VOLVO B10M MK III VAN HOOL ALIZEE

49 reclining seats, ZF 6 speed S690 manual gearbox, half rear emergency door, centre continental exit door, radio/PA system, centre mounted toilet, centre servery. Choice

1983 (PP) LEYLAND TIGER 245 PLAXTON
48 reclining seats, 6-speed ZF gearbox, continental door, toilet, radio, TV/video, drinks, livery gold/red/black, MoT 26.04.98. *(Ref: L/405/C)*

1983 (Y) LEYLAND TIGER PLAXTON 3200
53 seats, 6-speed ZF gearbox, power door, toilet, radio/PA, TV/video, drinks, fridge, livery white, MoT 11.09.97. *(Ref: L/400C)*

1996 (N) VOLVO VAN HOOL ALIZEE

44 seats, air conditioning, double glazed, continental door, toilet, radio/pa, TV/video, fridge, servery, MoT 12.03.98.
Ref: V394/C

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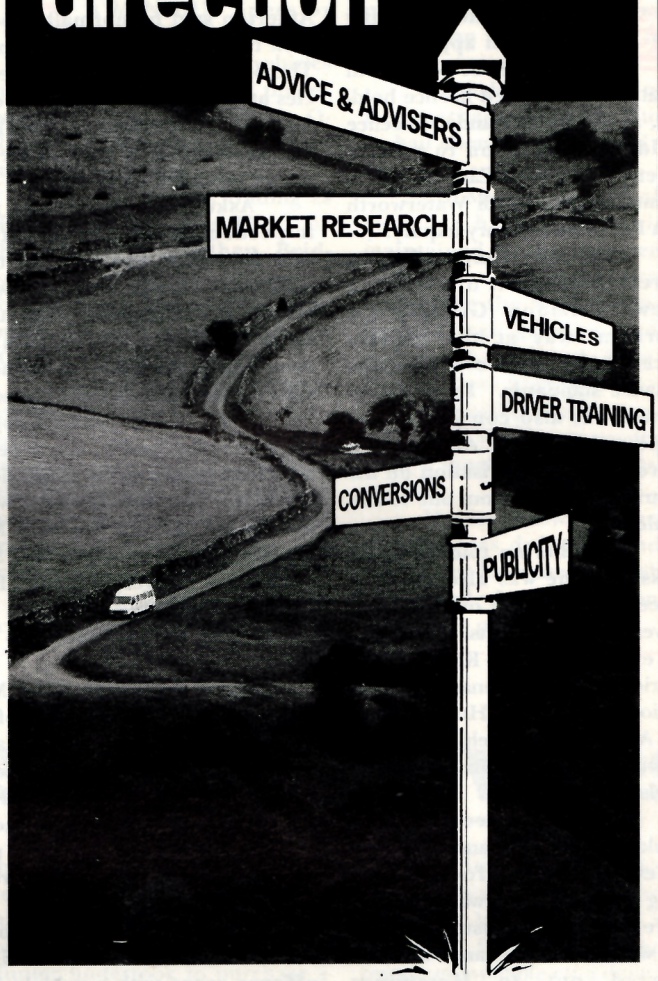

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▼ Licensing

'Rules apply as much to restricted licences'

THE operator-licensing legislation applies very strict rules of conduct in relation to restricted licence holders, as well as to standard licence holders, in relation to vehicle safety, said North Eastern traffic commissioner Keith Waterworth at a Leeds disciplinary inquiry.

Paul Atherton, trading as Direct Transport, of 10 South View, Trimoon Grange, Co Durham, was at the inquiry because of concern over his maintenance standards. The commissioner was also considering an application by Mr Atherton to increase the authorisation on his restricted licence from one to two vehicles.

Mr Atherton told the commissioner he was also running three vehicles, each of which had fewer than eight seats. DoT vehicle examiner Martin Kirby said he carried out a maintenance investigation in January. He examined Mr Atherton's one vehicle, issuing it with a defect notice for two advisory defects.

Only one inspection record could be produced and there was no evidence of any forward-planning system. There was no driver defect reporting system in use. He was told maintenance was contracted out to Hemmings Coaches. There were no facilities or off-road parking at the operating centre. Mr Atherton had held a licence since August 1994. He had been sent a warning letter about maintenance records, the lack of a driver defect reporting system and a lack of a forward planning system, in February 1995.

Mr Waterworth said it seemed Mr Atherton was sent warning letters and took no notice of them. That was a waste of public money as well as showing a degree of irresponsibility. Warning letters were supposed to galvanise operators into action.

Mr Atherton admitted not introducing a written drivers' defect reporting system because he only had one vehicle but Mr Waterworth said the legislation applied very strict rules of conduct to restricted licence holders concerning vehicle safety. Mr Atherton said he normally operated two vehicles from his home. The other drivers kept their vehicles at their homes. He was looking for new premises. He also had permission to park at Hemmings' premises if necessary.

Asked why there were no inspection records, Mr Atherton said the vehicle had been off the road until October, when it was tested. It was regularly inspected thereafter but the records had been kept at the home of his new maintenance contractor. He now had a diary showing when inspections were due and he was receiving photo-copies of the inspection records. The maintenance was now being carried out by a Mr Ritchie, who specialised in PSV work, on a six-weekly basis. He said his main fault had been in not keeping the paperwork up to date.

Mr Waterworth said Mr Atherton had been convicted of a vehicle excise duty offence in January 1995 and of using a vehicle without a Certificate of Initial Fitness, without a fire extinguisher, without a first-aid kit and with no O-licence disc displayed in March 1995.

Asked for an explanation, Mr Atherton said the excise offence arose with a vehicle he had hired in. The other offences arose when he had taken too much work on over the Summer and it had been a bit of a rush trying to get the vehicle sorted out. The vehicle had a Class 5 test on it, he said.

Issuing a final warning, and refusing to increase the vehicle authorisation, Mr Waterworth said his job was to ensure licence holders not only understood their professional obligations but also had the competence to put carry out their responsibilities effectively. Mr Atherton had received a clear written warning about the need to improve his maintenance systems, yet he did not do so. However, Mr Atherton had now made, and was proposing to make, changes that were likely to be beneficial.

The commissioner directed that the Vehicle Inspectorate carry out a maintenance reappraisal in six months.

▼ Legislation

Cleared of

Coach certified for 53

COACH operator John Shaw (Silverdale) Ltd has been cleared of overloading a 53-seater coach by Penrith Magistrates.

The company, of Stoneleigh, Silverdale, Carnforth, Lancashire, had pleaded not guilty to exceeding the gross permitted weight of the coach concerned.

Prosecuting for the Vehicle Inspectorate, Michael Fisher said that, when the coach, which was carrying 50 passengers, was weighed on the dynamic axle weighbridge at Harker, on the A74, it was found to exceed its maximum permitted weight of 17 tonnes by 1, 300 kilograms, an excess of some 7.65 per cent. Even when the luggage was removed from the coach, it was still 440 kilograms in excess of the permitted weight, said Fisher.

Defending, James Backhouse said that, unlike a case of overloading involving a goods vehicle, where the prosecution relied on a Ministry plating certificate which specified the permitted weights, in the case of public service vehicles they could only rely upon the manufacturer's plating certificate.

He argued that, unlike a Ministry plating certifi-

Reasonable d

▼ Maintenance

Authorisation is

COACH and bus operator John Hunter has had his O-licence authorisation cut to three and the number of local registered services he is allowed to operate frozen to the two currently registered because of maintenance problems.

North Western traffic commissioner Keith Waterworth was considering taking disciplinary action against the licence held by John and Kathleen Hunter, trading as Parker's of Grange, of The Nook Garage, Kent Bank Road, Grange-Over-Sands, Cumbria.

Mr Hunter, trading as Parker's Motors, was also seeking a fresh licence for four vehicles, operating from the same address, conditional upon the surrender of the partnership licence.

DoT vehicle examiner Bryan Heyhurst said he had carried out a maintenance investigation in December. Parker's Motors operated three single deckers and a minibus.

He examined a minibus and a single decker, imposing an immediate prohibition and a delayed prohibition respectively.

The minibus had six defects, three of which were immediately dangerous. A number of the defects were of long standing and had been missed when the minibus had been inspected two days previously by the operator. It had been due to go out on a school contract later that afternoon. Both vehicles were found to have further defects, including serious brake defects, when produced for clearance.

'A number of the defects were of long standing and had been missed by the operator's inspection'

The workshop was dirty, untidy and cluttered with rubbish, said Mr Heyhurst. Though the vehicles were being inspected at the stated intervals, the standard of inspection was completely inadequate. A number of the inspection records were unsigned and

overloading

was only carrying 50

cate, which had statutory force, the manufacturer's plate was hearsay evidence without evidence from the manufacturer of the coach. In this case there was no such direct evidence from the manufacturer.

Mr Backhouse said the coach had a Certificate of Initial Fitness issued by the Department of Transport for 53 passengers, yet the prosecution was claiming it was substantially overloaded when only carrying 50 passengers plus the driver and tour guide.

Dismissing the charge, the magistrates said they thought there was reasonable doubt over whether the permitted gross weight had, in fact, been exceeded. They would ask the Vehicle Inspectorate to find out why a coach with a certificate for 53 passengers was said to be significantly overloaded when only carrying 50.

ubt GVW had been exceeded

▼ Maintenance

Op admits using vehicle with a steering defect

A MINIBUS operator who admitted he had used one of his vehicles when he knew it had a power steering fault, has had his O-licence authorisation cut from two vehicles to one.

Ronnie Munro, trading as Ronnie Munro Bus Hire, of Brynffrwd, Bryncethen, Bridgend, Glamorgan, appeared before South Wales traffic commissioner John Mervyn Pugh at a Cardiff disciplinary inquiry.

Questioned by the commissioner, Mr Munro also agreed he had changed his maintenance arrangements without notifying the Traffic Area Office, carrying out the maintenance himself rather than contracting it out to a commercial garage.

He admitted he had been carrying out preventative maintenance inspections every six weeks rather than at the declared interval of five weeks.

Though he was not a qualified mechanic, said Mr Munro, he had always been involved with "spanners and tools."

Mr Munro undertook to revert to having the vehicles maintained by the commercial garage he had stated would undertake the work when the licence was granted and to reduce the period between inspections to four weeks.

Curtailing the licence, Mr Pugh said Mr Munro needed to have a much more responsible attitude.

He had known the power steering was defective and he should not have used the vehicle concerned when carrying members of the public.

cut and no more local services

mileages had been omitted on a number.

There was a driver defect reporting system but it did not appear to be working effectively. Over the last five years six immediate and two delayed prohibitions had been imposed on Parker's Motors vehicles and the initial failure rate at annual test was 92 per cent.

Mr Hunter said he had been operating coaches in partnership with his mother Kathleen, now deceased, since 1981 in addition to his taxi business. He had lost the services of the fitter who had assisted him and it became too much to run the business, inspect the vehicles and do some of the driving himself. Consequently, he had taken on a full-time fitter last November and as a result the maintenance system was much improved. Steps had been taken to tidy the garage up. However, it was a working garage and could never be completely tidy.

The previous fitter had become a bit lackadaisical over the filling in of the inspection records, said Mr Hunter. He now checked the work done by the fitter, but he agreed he had not counter-signed the records to show that had been done.

Mr Heyhurst said the defects found on the minibus two days after it had been inspected by the operator called into question the present fitter's ability to do the job properly.

Asked about convictions for failing to produce tachograph charts against the firm and one of their drivers, Mr Hunter said the driver concerned had done two or three part-time jobs for them the previous week and had handed his tachograph charts in. The following week he had been called away urgently and the driver took the vehicle out without collecting his previous week's charts. Conceding he had not notified the convictions, Mr Hunter said he had assumed the commissioner would have been automatically notified.

Mr Waterworth said that, if Mr Hunter failed to report convictions to him in the future, he would assume he was trying to pull the wool over his eyes.

Mr Hunter said the drivers checked over the vehicles on a weekly rather than a daily basis but Mr Waterworth said that was totally inadequate and futile. Mr Hunter undertook to purchase a copy of the Guide to Roadworthiness and to institute the driver defect reporting system recommended in that booklet. He agreed he had not followed the vehicle examiner's advice to use his Tapley meter to check the vehicles' brakes, saying he had not thought it would be effective with large PSVs. He gave the commissioner an assurance the vehicles would be rolling road brake tested every three months.

He assured the commissioner the vehicles would be brake tested every three months

Requiring the production of up-to-date bank statements and documentary evidence of the overdraft facility available within 28 days, Mr Waterworth said the law required Mr Hunter to have roughly £4,000 of capital resources available on a daily basis to be able to properly maintain the number of vehicles applied for.

Cutting the authorisation on the old licence from four to three vehicles, accepting its surrender and granting a fresh licence for three vehicles only, Mr Waterworth said he noted it was Mr Hunter's first public inquiry since 1988. Nonetheless, a significant number of prohibitions had been imposed and Mr Hunter had acknowledged his standards had been too low. The psv industry prided itself on its high professional standards and it was plain Mr Hunter had failed to meet those standards.

Mr Waterworth warned that, if Mr Hunter continued to fail to meet the required standards, he would take his licence off him and disqualify him from any further involvement in the carriage of passengers on the public highway. CBW

Let's have some fair legislation

Why keep taking it out on the safest form of road transport?

WHATEVER our individual feelings about the outcome of Thursday's election, we can probably unite in thanks that a tedious campaign is over. At one stage during the mud-slinging one side suggested the formation of a Scottish Parliament and this drew the comment that its function would be analogous to an English parish council.

No serving or prospective MP - as far as I am aware - ventured to suggest that the present British Parliament is but a parish council to the EU. They may have offered various thoughts on reforming the House of Lords, but none of our brave MPs had the courage to propose that it is the very size and function of the Commons that should be re-assessed.

If we have been successful in this country in getting out of recession it has been the result of businesses down-sizing and increasing the workloads and responsibilities of employees. Does the Parish Council of Great Britain, confined by the strictures of the EU, really need a House of Commons with 651 members? We provided the supreme government of an empire with far fewer.

I mention this because my experience is you do not get more action or better decisions from large committees. Indeed, observation and a measure of involvement with various bodies (within the industry and parish councils, too) over the years inclines me towards the reverse view. There tends to be less talking and more action in smaller assemblies. Should not our new government, for example, eschew the posturing and soft-targeting on road safety which has characterised Governments of the past and seek to discover what actually causes the majority of serious accidents and fatalities and have the guts do something about it?

For example, while I would never suggest that PSV driving hours compliance is un-important, I have never heard of a single person ever having been killed as a result of a coach or bus driver's non-compliance. I question whether the same can be said of the (unregulated) work and driving hours of other drivers.

I do not ever remember seeing any research or statistics to establish the degree of causal connection between the mechanical condition of vehicles and serious accidents. Again, I am not suggesting that there should be any diminution of the mechanical condition demanded of professionally-operated road vehicles, but why is the same maintenance inspection and enforcement regime not directed against the major killer of 10 people each day, the private car and motor-cycle? If the mechanical condition of vehicles is a significant factor in road casualties, should not the playing field be level and enforcement directed at the major culprits? The same argument can be applied to speed. If it is a killer (and the fact that speeding police cars usually manage to kill more people a year than the 72,000 PSVs on the road suggests that it is) what logic allows the vehicle groups that kill and seriously injure most people (cars and motorcycles) to have higher permitted speed limits (and no requirement for speed limiters) than other, safer, vehicles?

All of this is really a plea for our new Government to apply even-handed measures right across the range of road users. Within the road public transport sector there are other instances crying out for reform to give us the proverbial level playing field.

As a matter of some urgency consideration needs to be given not only to the ability to impound and/or confiscate illegally operated passenger carrying (and goods) vehicles, but to make detection easier. It is ridiculous that it is almost impossible to obtain the proof required of a separate fare having been paid on an apparently illegally operated minibus (of the kind now run by the landlord of my local pub), or that vehicles operated under permit by voluntary and 'community' organisations are non profit-making. Perhaps the burden of proof should be reversed to require anyone operating such a vehicle outside the PSV O-licence system to prove their compliance.

On the other hand, perhaps the cut-in point for PSV operator licensing should be raised to 17 seats - thus putting all vehicles with 16 or fewer seats on the same 'free market' footing. On 9 June 1994, in this column, I exposed the unfair competition inflicted on operators by road-trains. A reader has recently written a poignant note to me which I reproduce as it speaks for itself. He refers to the increasing enforcement measures targeted at PSV operators and then continues: "However, all is not lost if you operate local town services with a speed no more than 10 mph. Change your bus for a road-train! They have effectively caused some operators to abandon services and on others have seriously depleted revenue. You can operate a road-train subject to local council and police permission on any road of which they approve. My local council and police force thought a road-train would be a good traffic-calming measure! You do not need to register a local service, or have a timetable or a PSV O-licence, only a PCV licence to drive the tractor unit disguised as an engine. The cost of a road-train is only about two thirds of the price of a bus and, by putting on or taking off carriages you can adapt the seating capacity to the expected demand.

Not that officialdom cares about the road-train or how it operates. If trade is slack, or if it rains, or the driver needs a day off, the road-train simply does not run. We have tried to complain about this unfair, and unreliable, competition but we are told there is nothing that can be done about it."

As I pointed out three years ago, there is indeed nothing that can be done about it as the legislation stands at the moment. These road-trains are not, in legal-speak, passenger carrying vehicles because the 'vehicle', the mechanically-propelled engine unit, does not itself carry passengers. They are effectively a tractor with trailers and thus outwith any passenger carrying vehicle law.

Their use is authorised by the Department of Transport under Section 44 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 on the basis they are a 'special type of vehicle constructed for special purposes' and my understanding is that, as the above letter implies, these Section 44 permits are issued as long as the local council and police do not object. Road-trains are now getting so common that it is ludicrous to give them preferential treatment as special types of vehicle.

To anyone other than a lawyer they are indisputably passenger carrying vehicles. Perhaps some of our new MPs (even though a lot of them do have legal backgrounds) might see the sense of this and the need to legislate for fair competition in the road passenger transport market. CBW

'New Government should discover what causes crashes'

Wonder whiffs just the ticket

SCRATCH and sniff technology has entered the world of the humble bus ticket.

Around 15 million smell-impregnated tickets advertising Radion soap powder will be issued this month on buses in Liverpool, Manchester, Hull, Middlesbrough, Sunderland, Leicester, Nottingham and Glasgow.

The fragrance is trapped in microscopic bubbles applied to the paper; an overlying layer of ink contains normal ticket information and advertising. The idea originates from Image Promotions of Hove. Marketing manager Martin Henson said: "Most bus journeys are made by shoppers, so it's an ideal opportunity for advertisers."

While interest has come mainly from fragrance and washcare producers, the concept can be extended to other pleasant aromas such as mint or chocolate. But Mr Henson insists: "We want to keep some say in the smells used."

Venue just up their street

COACH drivers taking visitors to the Gay and Lesbian World Travel and Leisure Expo Freedom Fair 1997 (you couldn't miss the banner outside, could you...) will have had a chuckle when they arrived at the London venue. It was in Great Queen Street...

Very Disneyland, Mr Welch. Just add flowers

Hats off to our Peter...

PETER Iltyd Welch, head of commercial affairs for Disneyland Paris, is not usually known for his extrovert nature, warm and generous person though he is.

So when this extraordinary picture of him wearing the world's most extravagant hat arrived, we couldn't miss the opportunity to show the other side of his character. The whacky badges worn by Ian Henry of Leger (left) and Robert Shaw of Harry Shaw Coaches (right) pale by comparison. Carmen Miranda eat your heart out, says tourism editor Bill Golden. CBW

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1994 L EOS 90 49R, toilet
1994 L DAF WS3000 Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/ Toilet
1994 L DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R/ Toilet
1994 L DAF SB3000 Int Retarder, Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R/Toilet
1994 L DAF HS2700 Auto Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/Toilet
1994 L MB230LT Auto Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/ Toilet
1993 K DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R/ Toilet
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1993 K DAF SB3000 Auto Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF SM230LT Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R Toilet
1992 J DAF SB2305 Duple 340, 57R
1992 J DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R Toilet
1992 J DAF MB230LB Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/ Toilet

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1995 M DAF SB220 Auto, Northern Counties Paladin, 49 str bus
1995 M DAF DB250 Auto, Northern Counties Palatine II, 77 str double deck bus
1995 M DENNIS DART Auto, 10M, Plaxton Pointer, 40 str bus
1992 J DAF SB220 Auto, Ikarus Citibus, 48 str bus

1992 J DAF MB230 LT Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/ Toilet
1991 H DAF SB2305 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R Toilet
1990 G MB230LB Van Hool Alizee 'SH', 53R/Toilet
1990 G MB230LB Van Hool Alizee 'H'
1990 G DAF SB3000 Van Hool 'H', 49/Toilet
1989 F DAF SB2305 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 53R
1989 F DAF MB230LT Plaxton 3500, 51r/Toilet
1989 F DAF MB230LB Plaxton 3500 , 52R
1989 F DAF MB 230LB Plaxton, 51R/Toilet
1988 E DAF SB2300 Van Hool Alizee, 51R/Toilet
1988 E DAF MB230LT Plaxton 3500, 51R/Toilet
1988 E DAF MB230LB Plaxton 3500, 53R

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1990 G VOLVO B10M Plaxton 3500, 49R/Toilet
1990 G DAF DHTD Duple 320, 57R
1990 G SB3000 VAN HOOL ALIZEE DH,51R/toilet, air con
1989 G SCANIA K113 Van Hool Alizee 'SH', 49R/ Toilet
1989 F SB3000 VAN HOOL ALIZEE DH, 51R/toilet, air con
1989 F VOLVO B10M Van Hool Alizee H, 53R
1989 PP BOVA FUTURA FHD, 49R/Toilet
1989 SB3000 Plaxton 3500, 51/Toilet
1988 VOLVO B10M, Plaxton 3500, 49R/Toilet
1988 PP BOVA FUTURA FHD, 49R/Toilet
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LETTER OF THE WEEK

New vehicles not sole answer to problems

From Steve Whiteway

How I agree with Marksman's comments regarding drivers who do not bother to get out of their seat to see the paying customer on and off the coach. I don't see why a coach driver should not be regarded as a "chauffeur".

What's the difference except that a coach driver requires a higher level of skill (and a vocational licence), is responsible for many more lives, and is driving a 'limousine' costing at least three times that of a car. Are drivers and operators their own worst enemies in allowing this practice to continue?

It does after all, affect the whole industry, not just those who don't practise what is, after all, just good manners. We all suffer from the downmarket image portrayed. Perhaps bringing back the manual door would help.

The question of dirty and scruffy vehicles is especially applicable to bus services in some areas.

It never ceases to amaze me that operators boast of their huge investment in new buses and then don't bother to look after them to the extent they look scruffy within months. What is the point of new vehicles if the public does not see the benefit through them looking new and well cared for? Is it any wonder bus travel has such low appeal in this country?

Steve Whiteway
Epsom Coaches
Epsom
Surrey

Write to: The Editor
Coach and Bus Week
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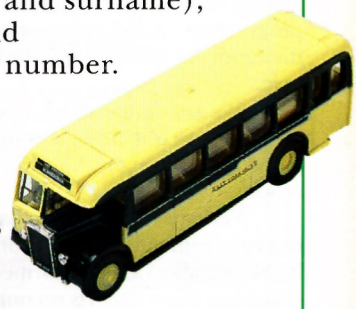

CORGI CLASSICS

Letter of the week wins a Corgi Classics model bus

BUSK is not here just to be popular

From Pat Harris

In your editorial Comment, *One man sticks his neck out* (*CBW*, 29 March) you talk about operators, suppliers and manufacturers being driven into a corner by the ineffective seatbelt legislation. Forgive me, but how many of these people actually responded to the Government's consultation documents in 1994?

BUSK's response to ministers was to ask for the introduction of laws requiring factory-fitted lap and diagonal safety belts to become compulsory on all new vehicles, retro-fitting only those vehicles deemed suitable, to license seatbelt installation companies, along with a legal requirement for only tested seatbelt specifications to be applied to existing vehicles, if fitted.

I assume, something I do not often do, that your comments of deadlines set for compulsory belts on school transport were in response to an ill-informed parental lobby, that you were meaning BUSK members. If this is the case, it is you who is ill informed.

You should note; in 1994 BUSK handed over a 160,000-member petition to Westminster calling for lap and diagonal safety belts. The wording even said "not lap belts." It may also interest or even surprise you that a large number of signatures were those of coach drivers. As you also know, BUSK literature has never demanded or asked for seatbelts in all school transport either.

BUSK's retro-fit steering group meeting in London in July 1996 was well represented by seatbelt experts, crash investigators etc.

BUSK organised this, not the industry, yet it is the industry you claim is "driven into a corner." Why does the industry not conduct such meetings instead of complaining that they did not know what standard belts had to be fitted to? Or, they could ask their representatives such as CPT to help them.

The purpose of BUSK setting up this meeting was to impress upon the Department of Transport the urgent need for it to publish required standards for coach and minibus operators. The DoT eventually issued booklets. BUSK takes credit for forcing the DoT to do something about the problem. We acted in a responsible manner. What did anyone else in the industry do to make the DoT listen? What did your readers do? What did you do?

Before you try to haul BUSK over the coals, just remember who it is in the UK who has raised safety issues, highlighted and kept on the agenda the need for proper funding for LEAs and the urgent need for a school transport act to ensure all school transport contracts are hired on a quality basis and not cost alone.

It is certainly not the coach and bus industry. Many seem too busy undercutting one another to notice what is staring them in the face - the ruin of their industry if they are not careful. If the general public is worried about travelling on coaches, it is not BUSK's fault. It is the fault of rogue operators being allowed to continue in business.

If you feel the industry was driven from outside and not from within, you must ask yourself why the industry did not start the ball rolling from 'within'. Could it be the will was not there? No doubt, if BUSK had not forced the issue, no changes for the better would be seen.

Your article asks many questions - why did *CBW* not get invited to BUSK's pull test? Simple, we did not want sensational storylines in your publication. As it was, the headline you did use and the letter for readers to use in their 'defence' was a bit silly to say the least. All of you, it seems, missed the point. BUSK was not saying anything about the safety of coach travel. What we publicised was bad seatbelt installation, but immediately you and the CPT are defensive. Why?

The fitment of belts will not be policed; the MoT will not inspect the installation of belts; the seatbelt installers are responsible if something goes wrong with a retro-fit - those are the answers to your 'serious questions' posed in your article.

Elite proved to some extent that it could make an installation work, although I understand more tests will need to be carried out. BUSK applauds anyone who tries to find a way around a problem, safely. Elite appears to be going down the right road.

Your assumption that BUSK was trying to prove it could not be done is wrong. We set out to and, indeed did prove, that seatbelt installation, if not applied correctly, will be lethal in an accident to the wearer of the

belts. Our point was well made because the BUSK coach is typical of the present standard of retro-fit in the UK.

The government's refusal to address the situation and the publications eager to accept advertising from seatbelt installation companies, regardless of whether they are able to fit belts safely, meant BUSK had little choice other than to inform the public of the truth behind the seatbelt fitment to many coaches and minibuses used to transport their children. It seems the truth does hurt and this is why BUSK is not always popular with all of your readers. However, as with the aftermath of the Public Eye's *Running Bent* programme, the same thing happened after four million viewers watched BBC's *Here and Now* programme. BUSK received many calls from the reputable companies offering their support.

We are not here to be popular. We are here because not enough people are prepared to take responsibility for their own actions.

Perhaps it may do you well for the future to remember, that if you refer to BUSK members as "ill informed" you are criticising those experts on our advisory panel. It is these experts who supply BUSK with much of its research and information. These same experts have studied their subject into transport safety. What expertise do you have Mr Morgan.

Pat Harris
National Organiser for BUSK
Usk
Monmouthshire

...the editor replies

At least there is one thing upon which we agree. The law relating to seatbelts in coaches and minibuses is a mess.

Consequently I am very pleased that BUSK called for lap and diagonal belts and that it is deeply concerned about the whole issue of retrofit.

Indeed, I welcome clarification of the BUSK response to the Government's consultation in 1994. Few would disagree that retrofitting should only be to those vehicles deemed suitable and that seatbelt installation companies should be licensed along with a legal requirement for only tested seatbelt specifications to be applied.

However, the sad conclusion is that these demands have not been enshrined in legislation.

You say BUSK takes credit for forcing the DoT to do something about the problem and you challenge the effectiveness of the coach and bus industry. However, in so doing, you highlight one of the biggest problems. BUSK has not worked with the professionals in the industry.

How can you possibly understand the complexities of coach and bus construction, never mind the responsibilities resting on the shoulders of the nation's 7,000 operators? That is what I mean by the ill-informed parental lobby.

I don't question the integrity of BUSK's expert advisers but I do question the wisdom of giving the issue of seatbelts such a high profile without working together with the very people who are affected directly by the consequences of your demands.

Elite appears to be doing it right - Pat Harris

If manufacturers, suppliers, operators and the travelling public had worked together the change in the regulations could have been formulated within a sensible timescale. There could have been three-point belts. And it would not have been retroactive.

Parents, of whom I am one, are quite rightly concerned about the safety of their children and I applaud the motivation. But I do not believe that we have the best result.

For at least 15 years the industry's trade association has been in liaison with the Department of Transport for a sensible solution and this magazine has consistently reflected the pragmatic stance taken by the industry - ie seatbelts will improve safety if the right belts are fitted to the right seats in vehicles designed to take them.

The solutions in the pipeline would have been properly tested. But no. The efforts of the industry have been sabotaged by exploitation of the emotional bandwagon generated by the media coverage of certain high-profile accidents.

It's so much more sensible to find out what was the cause of an accident before demanding solutions.

The coach and bus industry takes great pride in its safety record and is perfectly justified in defending its position, particularly because it has a commendable track record of positive response to proven safety initiatives such as anti-lock brakes, roll-over protection, speed limiters and retarders. What it does not like is the dog's breakfast which masquerades as the coach and minibus seatbelt legislation.

In the future we must all work together. Quality should be the name of the game and if this is promoted we can all have better vehicles on the road. If local authorities specified on quality not for price they will be offered a better return for longer contracts.

Together we can ensure that best practice prevails and quality vehicles are provided.

Mike Morgan
Editor, CBW

Congratulations, Dave

From Rod Hibberd

Congratulations Dave Nickson. A brave man indeed with faith in your convictions and dedication to the coach industry.

We are pleased that, through your own efforts, you have proved beyond any doubt that seatbelts can be retrofitted properly to the older generation of coaches and, more importantly, be safe and meet standards.

Well done. We are very pleased to have had out entire fleet fitted with seatbelts, expertly (and in high season) with little or no inconvenience by Elite Services and our insurers along with the VI accept the accompanying certificate of conformity.

Thank you Dave and your team. Keep up the good work and lead where others can now only follow.

Rod Hibberd
Alexcars Ltd
Cirencester
Gloucester

(This letter was sent direct to Elite Services - Ed)

Thanks for the model

From Paul McKenna

May I take this opportunity to thank you for the excellent Corgi model RMI933 London Transport Routemaster.

It was a wonderful surprise and has now taken pride of place in our display cabinet, with other Routemaster and passenger transport vehicles of the past.

As we are printers of destination blinds for the London Transport companies, the Routemaster has always been of interest to us. It epitomises a reliability and elegance which is second to none. Thank you once again.

Why not visit our web page, mckennabrothers.co.uk? I hope it will be of interest to you.

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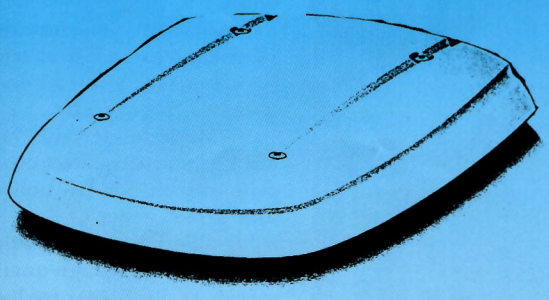

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1989 MERCEDES BENZ 0303 (M) 12M 53 reclining seats (VOGEL), red/orange/yellow moquette, courier seat, rear continental door, tinted side windows with roller blinds, power entrance door with peage window, full SUTRAK air conditioning, carpet to gangway and driver's area, finished all white. .....**M.O.T JULY 1997**

1985 VOLVO B10M (A) BERKHOFF EMPEROR fitted with ZF fully automatic gearbox with integral retarder, 60 reclining seats, red striped moquette, courier seat, toilet, drink's machine, tinted double glazed side windows with blinds, power entrance door, finished cream/maroon. .....**M.O.T JUNE 1997**

1980 VOLVO B58 (M) PLAXTON SUPREME IV 12M 53 seater, red striped moquette, power entrance door, finished in white with lilac relief. .....**M.O.T AUGUST 1997**

1989 VOLVO B10 (M) CAETANO ALGARVE 53 seater, brown striped moquette, power entrance door, finished all white. Private number plate. .....**NEW M.O.T**

1989 DENNIS JAVELIN 240 (M) PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200 51 reclining seats, grey striped moquette, rear offside toilet, continental door, TV, video, water boiler, power entrance door, finished white/orange/yellow. ....**M.O.T MARCH 1998**

1987 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200 53 reclining seats, brown moquette, tinted double glazed side windows, power entrance door, finished white with blue stripes. .....**M.O.T DECEMBER 1997**

1990 DAF SB 2300 (M) 599 JONCKHEERE 51 reclining seats, grey striped moquette, courier seat, centre sunken toilet, continental door, drink's machine to video, double glazed power entrance door, finished white/yellow/orange. . .....**M.O.T JANUARY 1998**

1987 MERCEDES (M) 307D 12 seater, grey/red/orange striped moquette, overhead luggage racks, radio and PA tape, finished all white. .....**M.O.T JANUARY 1998**

1985 DAF DKFL VAN HOOL ALIZEE (M)12M 50 reclining seats (recent retrim) in Holdsworth Brown moquette, courier seat, rear offside floor mounted toilet, tinted side windows with curtains, power entrance door, finished red/cream ..... **M.O.T. JULY 1997**

1993 PLAXTON 425 INTEGRAL (M) powered by CUMMINS L10 290 BHP ENGINE TELMA retarder, 53 reclining seats, footrests, armrests to isle, tinted side windows, curtains, centre continental door and steps, courier seat, radio and PA tape, brown/orange moquette, finished white with grey skirt. .....**M.O.T. SEPTEMBER 1997**

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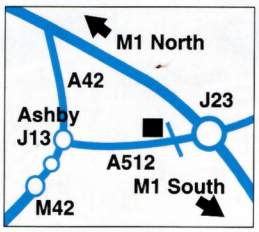

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DENNIS

New Javelins all fitted with air-con

Buddens adding five vehicles for Insight incoming US tour work

by Mike Morgan

HAMPSHIRE-based coach operator Buddens Coaches is adding five new air-conditioned Dennis Javelin GX 290 bhp coaches to its fleet. All are on contract to incoming US tour specialist, Insight.

"We have worked with Insight for a number of years," said managing director Simon Budden, "and for our latest contract will be providing air-conditioned coaches in Insight livery.

"These will be used for tours of the British Isles, collecting visitors in London and taking them on any one of Insight's range of tours covering the UK and Ireland."

The five new coaches bring to nine the number of Javelins for the Romsey-based firm, which was founded in 1926 by Mr Budden's grandfather. They were bought after the company's experience running Javelins last season.

The first two have 49-seat Neoplan Transliner bodies. A further three Javelins are due shortly with Berkhof Axial bodies.

KIRKBY

Premieres for Elcock

JOHN Elcock of Elcock Reisen in Telford has put his purchases Plaxton's way.

This season, the 40-strong fleet includes two new Premieres, an Excalibur and a Beaver, all coach-equipped for the Shropshire company's very varied work.

"The Excalibur has been bought primarily for our UK and Continental tour programme, while the Premieres will be used mainly on UK tour and charter work," said Mr Elcock. "The Beaver is for local private hires."

The Beaver is strides away from being a bus. Used specifically for corporate hire, it has a courier seat within its specification.

"We pride ourselves on providing a high-quality service to all our clients, and we have maintained a steady investment in new coaches," said Mr Elcock.

Elcock's business was founded in 1931 by John's father, and includes chauffeur cars and executive taxis.

KIRKBY

Bennetts

DICK Bennett has adopted a new silver livery to promote his company's Silverline tour programme and has bought Plaxton-bodied Dennis Javelin for the second successive year, adding air conditioning to the specification.

Bennetts was founded 12 years ago and first tried Javelins last year when it took two from Kirkby.

Mr Bennett said: "We will be using this latest coach primarily on our UK holiday tour programme.

"We have a reputation for providing a high-quality service and this year we have added air-conditioning to the specification, which is something we have previously only offered on Continental tours."

The company runs 31 vehicles and the new Javelin has 53 reclining seats, tinted double glazing, coffee machine and full-draw curtains.

adopts a new, silver livery

Deals In Brief

Pick of the bunch

A CAETANO Algarve II was pick of the bunch for Meadway Private Hire of Birmingham. The Javelin 240-chassis coach is a standard executive with 53 seats, stereo/PA, curtains, double-glazing and courier seat.

Priory's fourth Bova

PRIORY Coaches boss Cyril Cowdrey has added a fourth low-line Bova Futura to his fleet. Supplied by Moseley in the South, the 53 seater powered by 8.65-litre DAF engine will be used on excursions and joins the Gosport-based company in what is believed to be the country's largest Bova fleet of 21 vehicles.

A golden roadshow

RENNIES of Dunfermline celebrated its 50th anniversary in conjunction with the AW Group of Leicester by holding an Iveco roadshow at the Forth Bridge Hotel. One of the company's three new Iveco EuroRiders provided demonstration runs.

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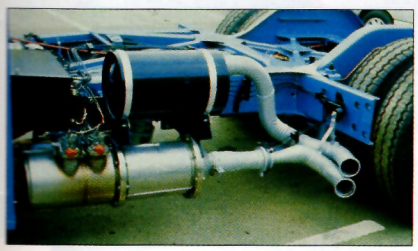

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comment

AS a keen environmentalist, I was very pleased to have had the opportunity to edit this supplement, not least because it has broadened my knowledge of the subject immeasurably. The need to understand the issues of manufacture and operation of emissions technologies - whether an exhaust catalyst or a complete, hybrid bus - is not unique to those with an academic interest; local authorities, dealers and operators need to balance the necessity of drastically reducing pollution with the very real engineering and financial implications of doing so.

For, make no mistake, the next decade will herald a sea change in public demand for cleaner towns and cities, and rafts of local and national legislation which will drive smoky vehicles off the urban road. At long last, the UK is recognising that air pollution is extremely expensive, reducing our standard of living generally, detracting from city tourism, and destroying not only our own countryside but raining acid upon forests throughout Europe.

Air pollution adds millions of pounds to the health bill which, translated into more emotive reality, means it maims and kills our children and old people.

For, make no mistake, the next decade will herald a sea change in public demand for cleaner towns and cities, and rafts of local and national legislation which will drive smoky vehicles off the urban road

It is extremely gratifying to note that there is a much deeper understanding of this situation within the public transport industry than was the case at deregulation. A decade ago, the motoring public looking for a scapegoat for pollution started pointing the finger at buses, and still is. But, in the last 10 years, this industry has moved on from the simplistic view, and equipped itself to point the finger back at cars, while simultaneously paying for the development of a new generation of cleaner vehicles.

There is a long way to go. National and local governments must help operators make new technologies pay by freeing the roads for buses. But it's a pact and, if we are to force motorists to leave their keys on the telephone table, they must be assured that the money they spend will be invested in technology which makes a real difference.

In the next few pages, we have asked the real experts of the industry to put their point of view. Operators are more than capable of untangling the web of fact and weaving it into their own situation.

For there are no perfect engines, perfect fuels or perfect solutions. There is a place for every form of emissions reduction, and I hope we have given each, if you'll pardon the poor joke, a thorough airing in this supplement.

Mark Williams

Sparking change

ONE of the most significant developments in hybrid vehicle technology could result in buses which run on sunlight and produce water as a byproduct.

London-based Zevco has devised a hydrogen/alkaline fuel cell, of a type used in the Apollo space project, which can be mass produced: "This is not something for the future, this is for now," said the company's chief executive Nicholas Abson. "People have demonstrated vehicles powered by fuel cells before - the big problem is that the cells they use just can't be mass produced."

The cells, made from plastic, process super-cooled hydrogen and oxygen from the air through two catalysts and an electrolyte to produce electricity, which is then temporarily stored in batteries before being used to power the motors. An experimental model working in a tiny Subaru van produces 400 watts, but Zevco says it will have a 1,600 watt unit by the end of the year, and a projection suggests 100 mph vehicles are possible.

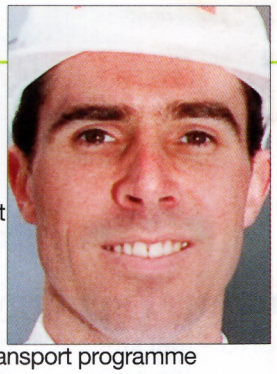
Running costs are expected to drop to a third of those of fossil fuel vehicles.

Lisbon liquid

LISBON operator Rodoviaria de Lisboa has taken its first LPG bus for assessment.

The privately-owned company, which runs 320 vehicles, has a loan vehicle from DAF Bus in Holland, with part-funding of the project by fuel supplier Shell Portuguesa LDA. Due to severe gradients in the city, it has so far run its vehicle in the suburbs but production vehicles will have a low-gear driveline.

'We'll save £35k per bus'



THE price premium of gas buses need not dissuade operators from investigating alternative fuels, says Powershift.

The scheme, run by the Energy Savings Trust, will fund up to half the additional cost of vehicles and, using a block purchase scheme which depends on multiple orders, will achieve further savings on the new price.

Bus buyers are in the running for a budget of £2 million, along with taxi and distribution companies and, to get the lion's share of the grants and the lowest price for vehicles, will need to start planning their bid soon. Already, bus operators have formed some 60 per cent of the 200 applicants for the first round of grants. The second wave of applications must be submitted by September.

"The Powershift Funding Partnership programme is the most important step ever to creating a sustainable market for alternatively-fuelled vehicles in this country," said transport programme manager Jonathan Murray (above).

EST reckons it can produce savings of up to £35,000 on a single LPG bus and £40,000 on a CNG version.

The EST can be contacted on 0171 931 8401, on a hotline, 0345 277200, and on the Internet at http://www.est.org.uk

Cat cracks smog

WILTS & Dorset Buses is claiming smoke has been halved and other emissions reduced by 90 per cent after fitting exhaust catalysts to MetroRiders and Bristol VRTs on trial in its fleet.

The experiment was partly funded by local clean-air initiative Travelwise in Dorset and involved fitting ECS' AZ Catalysts (see page 11 of this supplement), supplied by Fleetmaster Bus and Coach, to an example of both buses.

"The improvement in hydrocarbon levels has been tremendous," said Rod Luxton, engineering director for W&D and chairman of the South-East Engineers' Association. "I believe this is due to the wash-coat and it's thanks to this that you don't have to use special fuels.

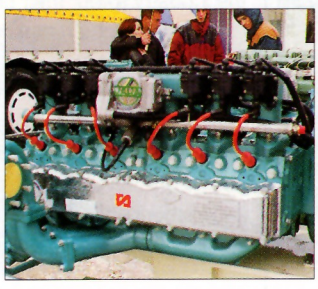
"The units are stainless steel, are easy to fit, and they don't need any maintenance. If, for example, they get contaminated with oil, the situation will rectify itself once the source of the oil has been corrected."

Rod Luxton (left): 'tremendous improvement'

by mark williams

Mr Luxton says opacity dropped by 49 per cent to 60 per cent, without loss in back pressure or increase in fuel consumption. Even without load and at well below working temperature, hydrocarbons reduction reached up to 90 per cent.

The other good news is the price; the catalyst can be fitted for around £1,500 per bus, with grants available from many local clean-air initiatives and Quality Partnerships.



Raba's gas engine

Hungary goes Aussie for LPG

RABA HUNGARIAN engine manufacturer Raba has entered the CNG market with a conversion based on its horizontal engine.

The 10.35-litre unit, rated at 221 bhp, uses Australian, Transcom-designed conversion equipment. Another option uses Dutch-made Deltec conversion parts with a venturi-tube gas mixing system, enabling a slightly lower compression ratio.

Five of the Transcom-based Raba G10TE engines are currently being trialled in the Hungarian capital, Budapest.

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First steps: the gas bottles used go onto FirstBus's CNG bus

natural synergy

Michael Hardware charts the progress of British Gas fuel straight from the mains

Two successive cuts in the rate of tax applied to natural gas used as a transport fuel, 15 per cent in the 1995 Budget and 25 per cent in last year's Budget, have certainly highlighted the Government's confidence that the widespread use of natural gas will help reduce the levels of inner-city pollution.

This, coupled with the Prime Minister himself accepting delivery of the first alternatively-fuelled vehicle to enter Government service, a compressed natural gas (CNG) powered Rover 827, has led to an increase in the interest shown in the fuel by industry and the public.

The policy adopted by the Government is very similar to that used in the 1980s when lead-free petrol was being encouraged: successive reductions in tax producing an increasing financial incentive for the market to convert.

The coach and bus industry realised the potential of CNG a number of years ago. Various operators have been convinced of the benefits and have invested in dedicated CNG-powered buses. Early 1996 saw Southampton CityBus purchase 16 CNG-powered Dennis Dart buses, FirstBus in Bristol a Dennis Dart, and Newbury Buses one Optare bus.

These were followed later in the year by Stagecoach Cambus purchasing two Optare buses, for its Cambridge city centre park and ride route, Newbury

The Bristol experience has been limited to this single vehicle, powered by a Cummins CNG unit

Buses a second Optare bus, and Travel West Midlands, a subsidiary of National Express Group, announcing a £2 million project to buy 14 Volvo B10L buses for use on one of its high-volume routes in the Midlands. Towards the end of the year, Northampton Buses announced its intention to purchase six Volvo buses.

The current obstacle to the widespread adoption of CNG is the lack of a refuelling infrastructure. CNG refuelling is very similar in nature to diesel in terms of driver operation. The vehicle still has to pull up to a pump and attach a nozzle. With CNG, the differences are that delivery is via the existing gas pipelines to the refuelling station, not by road tanker, and refuelling is by a sealed connection from a gas compressor. These in themselves will reduce the numbers of tankers on the roads and alleviate increasing concerns over the escape of diesel vapour during the refuelling process.

British Gas Trading is the market leader in the development of the CNG market in the UK. The company's natural gas vehicles division, British Gas NGV, has been operating in the market for more than four years, investing many millions of pounds in technology development and refuelling infrastructure.

Tom Gorman, head of British Gas NGV, explained: "By far the largest fleets of natural gas vehicles are those operating in the liveries of British Gas businesses. However, there are other organisations which are becoming major users. Apart from bus operators, local authorities, such as the London Boroughs of Sutton and Merton, together with Bournemouth Borough Council and many others, are placing orders and operating significant fleets.

"The infrastructure is an obstacle, but this is not going to be so in the long term. British Gas NGV currently has 12 CNG refuelling stations around the country, with a further four under construction. Our gas station initiative, which we launched last year, has resulted in considerable interest and I envisage further announcements of new gas stations in the near future."

Neil Kinnock refuels a TWM CNG bus

Targeted specifically at fleet operators, the gas station package involves British Gas NGV financing the construction and operation of a refuelling facility, with the operator paying only as gas is dispensed. The package includes all elements from layout design, through planning and construction, to the operation, maintenance and management of the facility. Fleet managers also receive monthly invoices for CNG consumed, together with other valuable fleet management information.

Tom Gorman continued: "We are focusing our attention on the fleet operator at the moment, it being more practical to provide a gas station for depot-based fleets. However, we try to ensure that new gas stations, although primarily serving specific fleets, are available for wider use, thus expanding the network.

"There will come a point, not only through the development of the British Gas network, but also as other suppliers enter the market, when the number of refuelling points makes it practicable for smaller fleets and even the private motorist to consider converting.

"If Government continues with its current taxation policy on alternative fuels, it is inevitable that we will see a revolution in transport which has never been seen before in this country. Although it will not happen immediately, when it does, the effects on the urban environment will be obvious through improved air quality and rarer occurrences of Summer smogs." ■

a liquid asset

An LPG refuelling installation is much like any diesel pump

Both CNG and LPG have their proponents, but Henry Clayton of Shell Gas says the latter offers the benefits without the headaches

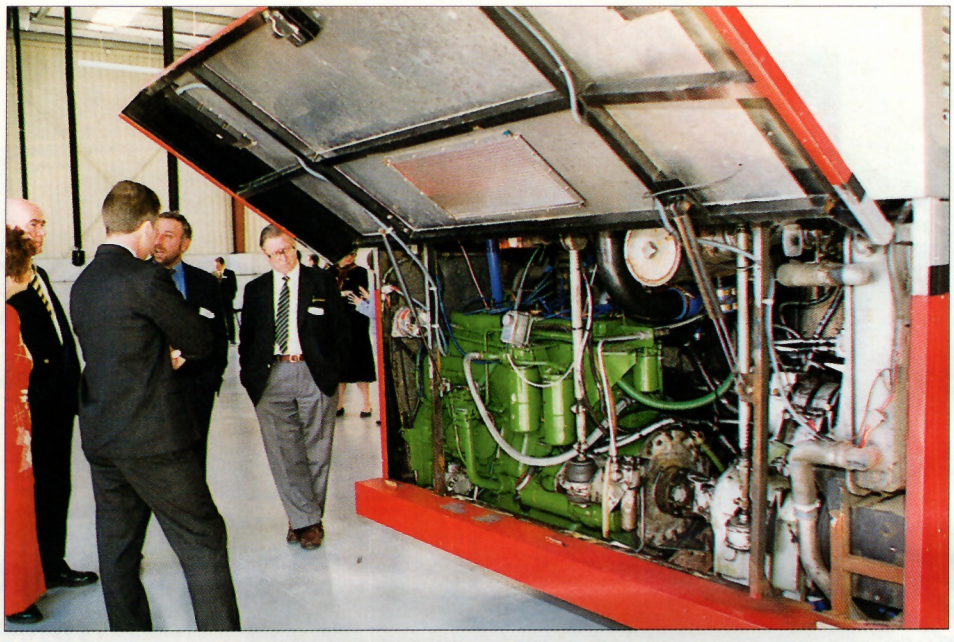
IN the battle for bus fleets, two types of gas fuel have led the way in marketing to the major bus groups. What may have been forgotten is that, though these groups are big, their bus depots may be small, and that's why LPG may be ahead of the game.

LPG can be conveniently delivered by tanker, can be stored above or below ground, and is simple to dispense, with refuelling speeds comparable to conventional fuels.

All of these factors underline its suitability for vehicle fleets.

Formed over millions of years beneath the ground, Liquefied Petroleum Gas is found both onshore and offshore alongside oil and natural gas. Although it exists as a gas at normal atmospheric pressure, when under high pressure, it turns to liquid. This liquid can be stored in pressure tight tanks or cylinders meaning that it can be easily delivered to end users, held in bulk storage vessels and, for vehicles, is dispensed in a similar manner to petrol or diesel.

The two gaseous automotive fuel options - Auto-LPG and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) - represent the best



Green LPG at Ensign Bus...no gas main, no problem

alternative fuel solution for urban fleets in situations where pollution is a concern. Like Auto-LPG, CNG offers reduced emissions but, as an automotive fuel, it is less practical. CNG requires access to a sufficiently large gas main offering little flexibility on location. Comparative tests have also shown that CNG provides a lower vehicle range and needs much heavier fuel tanks to cope with the enormous storage pressure required. This effectively reduces the vehicle load capacity while an expensive compressor facility is needed to avoid lengthy refuelling times. Auto-LPG, therefore, is the most practical of the two gaseous automotive fuels.

The properties of LPG make it eminently suitable for automotive use. It has a naturally high octane rating which is ideal for use in modern, high-technology spark injection engines. It has a simple, clean-burning molecular structure which produces low emissions and contributes to a very long engine life and, because it is easily liquefied at modest pressure, fuel tanks can be small and light. This gives Auto-LPG vehicles an excellent operating range.

The current scarcity of LPG refilling points on retail forecourts means that, at present, the fuel is most practical for urban fleets which have a central refuelling point. Typically, vehicles in such fleets would drive in the region of 200 miles per day and would return to base at night. One of the major issues for operators of such fleets to consider when weighing up the Auto-LPG option would be the comparative refuelling times of Auto-LPG and other fuels, most notably diesel.

Refuelling with LPG is similar to conventional refuelling, except the fuel itself is held under pressure, up to a maximum of 10 bar in the Summer. Refuelling is undertaken via a simple tank, pump and metering system used to transfer, measure and dispense the required amount of fuel. Filling takes place using a flexible hose and a screwed connector with an ACME 1.75-inch connector thread. The hose has a breakaway device which allows the hose to part in the middle, if the vehicle drives off with the hose still connected. This takes place without any loss of product. It can be manually reconnected by screwing together.

However, Shell Gas is planning the introduction of a Dutch bayonet system into the UK. The system, which utilises a TODO connector, allows for high flow rates and zero product loss on disconnection. Filling times for light commercial vehicles are close to that of conventional fuel. Theoretically the increased amount of fuel required on board could mean a disparity in the time taken to fill buses. However, Shell Gas' considerable worldwide experience in the distribution of Auto-LPG, particularly in mature markets like Australia and the Netherlands, has led to its development of an ultra-fast filling system which enables a typical bus to be filled within three minutes.

The Dutch have taken to LPG

It is accepted custom and practice that all of the dispensing and storage equipment for Auto-LPG be supplied and maintained by the gas supplier. This, in reality, provides an added layer of protection for the fleet operator as the total supply package will also offer regular maintenance and the availability of 24-hour, 365-day emergency cover. In this way, the infrastructure of fuel provision remains the responsibility of the gas supplier and frees the operator to concentrate on his core business, operating vehicles. With this in mind, it is clearly important that fleet operators confirm the ability of any supplier with whom they are in discussion to provide this level of service.

Bus companies interested in the cost and environmental benefits which Auto-LPG can unquestionably provide must approach the issue from the standpoint that ultimately LPG would account for a significant proportion of their fleet, and not just one or two 'novelty' vehicles. This being the case, the refuelling cycle then becomes an even more major consideration. There are signs that this is beginning to happen, with market interest signalling a significant momentum towards a broad switch to gas-operated fleets. Gas buses are now in the UK ready for trial, and grant funding is available to bus companies seeking subsidies for such tests.

By whichever criteria one chooses to judge Auto-LPG - cost, environmental friendliness, convenience or performance - the argument for adoption by coach and bus operators is undeniably persuasive. ■

cats with pedigree

Bob Cawdell of Engine Control Systems takes you on a tour of the subject. He explains the workings of the 'cats' which are cleaning up the act of London's famous Routemasters

IT is widely recognised that public transport trends within our cities will be towards zero or near-zero emission vehicles.

Despite advances in electric vehicles, economic zero-emission vehicles will take a very long time to evolve. Therefore, we must start to implement steps now which will reduce the impact that in-service vehicles currently have on the environment and on public health.

One radical answer is new natural gas buses, but often overlooked is the improvement which can be made to emissions by the use of exhaust after-treatment technologies to the existing diesel urban bus population.

Major developments in oxidation catalyst technology for diesel engines have taken place over the past several years.

Modern oxidation catalysts employ several approaches to optimise a catalyst for diesel applications. First, the catalyst will be formulated for a given characteristic engine exhaust temperature range.

The amount of precious metal used may also vary with the targeted exhaust temperatures. Basically, increasing the precious metal increases the activity of the catalyst, as does increasing the overall size of the catalyst. However, a balance must be achieved to avoid conversion of the fuel sulphur into sulphate.

In advanced catalytic systems, not only has the catalytic formulation been optimised for certain operating conditions, there must also be an engineered washcoat to stabilise the previous metal catalyst while affording the adsorption of a wide range of fuel and oil-based hydrocarbons at temperature below the peak catalytic activity of the active precious metal.

This engineered washcoat allows for the adsorption of these hydrocarbons at lower temperatures, thus increasing their time in contact with the active catalyst and maximising their conversion.

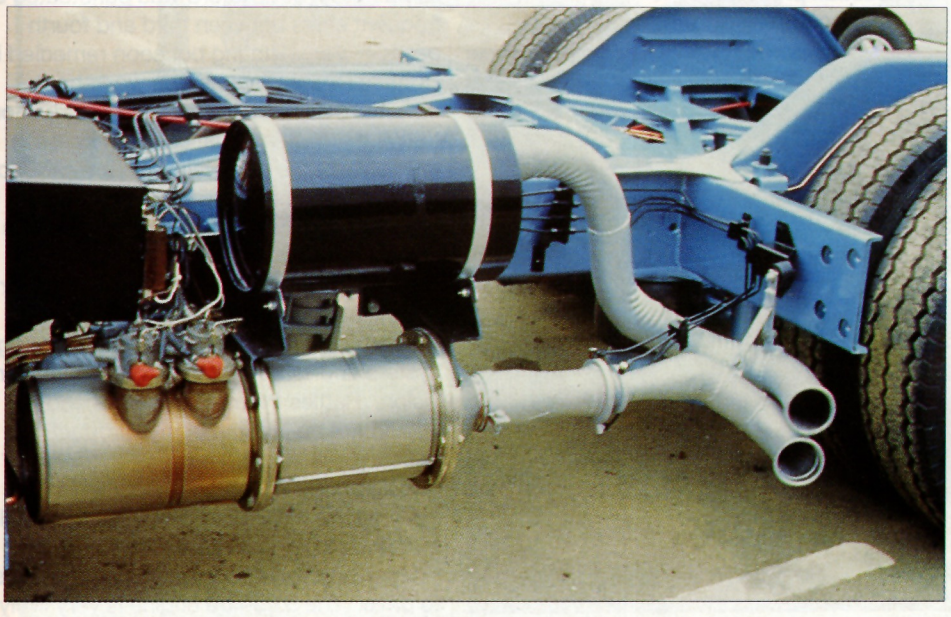
The catalyst may be installed on to the vehicle in two forms. Firstly, as a separate converter unit, which is advantageous as it allows for the catalyst to be installed in a smaller space and possibly closer to the engine, which is rarely an issue.

The second form of installation for the catalyst is to be combined with noise attenuation elements and built into a silencer replacement unit. This type of application is most suitable for urban buses due to the limited underfloor space. It also provides ease of installation and optimises exhaust backpressure.

Engine Control Systems' expertise in catalyst application has developed a unit called the AZ Purifier and Purimuffler. This new AZ Catalyst combines the optimisation of all criteria when used during typical urban transport operation.

These catalysts employ the latest technology, inhibiting sulphation while maximising catalytic performance. They can be operated successfully on standard diesel road fuel with current sulphur levels of 0.05 per cent (the European limit from October '96). They also offer substantial particulate matter reduction by oxidation of the oil or fuel-derived soluble or volatile organic fractions (SOF & VOF) which are normally emitted as a component of the particulate matter. The organic fraction of the particulate has been argued to be the most harmful component of the particulate matter to human health.

After recent tests conducted by London Transport Buses at the Millbrook test facility, a selection of buses was subjected to emissions analysis during a typical duty cycle test. A comparison was performed between the standard vehicles running on city diesel and then the addition of oxidation catalysts. The reported results indicated an average reduction of 86 per cent hydrocarbons, 92 per cent carbon monoxide and 45 per cent particulate. London Transport Buses is subsequently funding the supply of up to 250 catalytic converters on to Routemaster type buses operating in central London. ■



There's no shortage of space for a bus catalyst

steppi on the

The eagerly awaited gas-powered DAF Bus SB220 has started trials in the UK - Mike Morgan was first to get behind the wheel

PICTURE the scene. Blue skies, clean air and green fields. It's the very image of peace and tranquillity. A green environment where everyone enjoys a pollution-free existence - a real boost to the quality of life.

Utopia? Maybe. But in the search for the illusive zero-emission vehicle, fuels other than diesel come high on the agenda and Dutch manufacturer DAF has driven a development programme which has taken it down the LPG road.

The first lowfloor bus in Britain with LPG engine is ready to start its programme of trials and demonstration. It's from DAF Bus and its livery conveys the benefits of using alternative fuel - deep blue sky, pollution-free air and healthy landscape.

This eagerly-awaited Northern Counties Paladin-bodied DAF Bus lowfloor underframe is to the order of importer Hughes DAF and the power plant is the first specially designed horizontal 8.65-litre engine developing 170 kW.

DAF's home market has been familiar with LPG for many years and the claimed benefits include: reduced Nox emissions - diesel engines emit 17 to 18 times more; lower noise; less vibration and no emission of soot particles.

Two roof-mounted 300-litre LPG tanks fuel an operating radius of around 600 km. But the key environmental feature is the GG170 LPG engine which, DAF says, reduces emissions by 70 per cent and noise levels by 50 per cent.

With maximum power output of 170 kW at 2,000 rpm and torque of 940 Nm at 1,200 rpm the engine is a match for the GS160 diesel with its output of 160 kW and torque of 850 Nm or the optional GS200, offering 200 KW and 1010 Nm.

The diesel produces maximum output at 2,300 rpm and maximum torque at either 1,100rpm or, in the case of the GS200, 1,500 rpm. This compares with a more tractable LPG-powered GG170, where power peaks at 2,000rpm.

Consequently the gas bus is more responsive, giving it driver-friendly qualities, though it lacks the top-end power of the higher-rated diesel option.

At the heart of its power plant is a multi-point LPG injection system developed by DAF in collaboration with Gentec, the Dutch LPG engine specialist. Instead of the vaporising in conventional LPG systems the fuel is injected in liquid state just in front of the inlet valves, which enables better dosing and consequently optimum control of the combustion process.

A more complex exhaust system effectively takes up the area vacated by the obsolete diesel tanks. The fuel filler cap is on the rear offside corner adjacent to other service points and, apart from the roof pods, the bus looks the same as any conventional bus with the same body.

There's even less difference on the inside — 21 seats in the lowfloor area and an identical number in the raised section at the rear. But passengers are certain to notice the absence of the familiar noises which emanate from muscular diesel engines. The sound is more like that of a petrol engine — much softer on the ear and measuring one decibel less on the *CBW* noise meter.

For the driver there are subtle changes. Strange markings on the fuel gauge are the only difference in the cab and power characteristics which are welcome through the right foot. The driver does not experience lower noise levels. However, the ear does pick up various components unique to LPG - notably the fuel being pumped from the roof tanks to the engine.

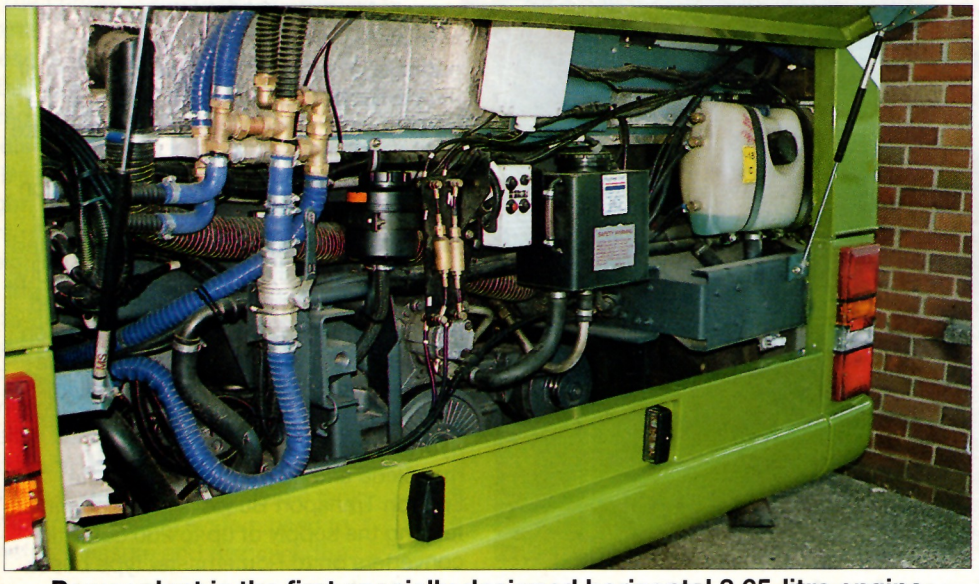
Inevitably the drive characteristics from the different engine require a modified gearbox set up. Quicker build-up to peak power beat the gearbox, forcing down-changes earlier than desired such that climbing out of Bradford was punctuated by frequent shifts between third and fourth gears — very irritating but soon remedied in Hughes DAF's Cleckheaton workshop.

As for the Northern Counties contribution to this trail-blazing bus, ease of access is the name of the game and this pre-production Paladin, one of the last built at Wigan before production transferred to Plaxton's at Scarborough last month, is a development of the prototype roadtested last year (*CBW*, 14 December 1996).

Improvements include simplified heating system and slim A-pillars, improving driver vision. Rattles from the cab bulkhead should not be present on the production buses.

Ride quality over the indifferent west Yorkshire roads was firm over the front axle but very smooth elsewhere on the bus.

Once on the move this is a delightful bus to drive. The 8.65-litre engine is very lively and responsive. Yet the long wheelbase



Power plant is the first specially designed horizontal 8.65-litre engine

ng gas

has to be watched carefully. But, more important, are its green credentials — quieter and less polluting than diesel.

However, British operators attracted to the concept are faced with additional capital costs estimated at an extra £20,000 on a vehicle which already costs over £100,000 in standard diesel-powered form.

Although this premium is dependent on the number of vehicles ordered, it is, nevertheless, a cost barrier to the widespread introduction of LPG. Supporters of the project are hopeful that the demonstrator will help convince Government it should support the benefit with fiscal measures. ■

It's from DAF Bus and the livery conveys the benefits of alternative fuels

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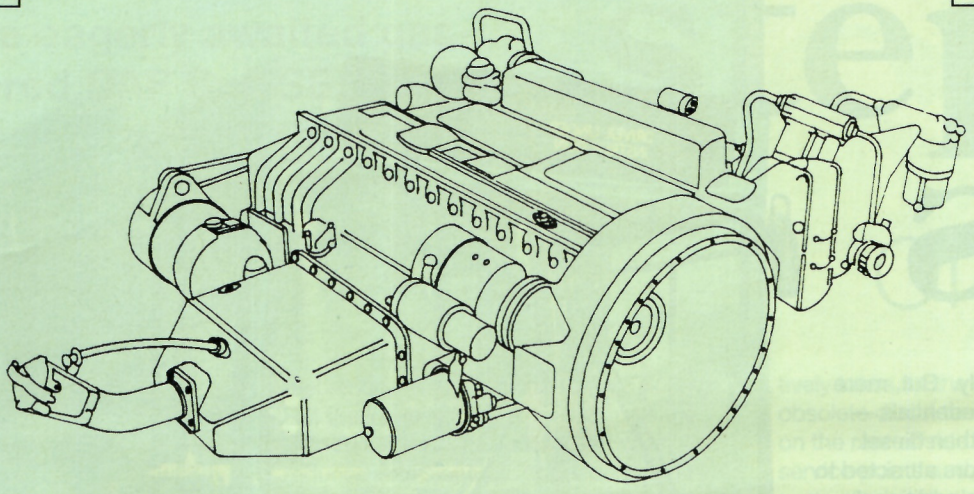

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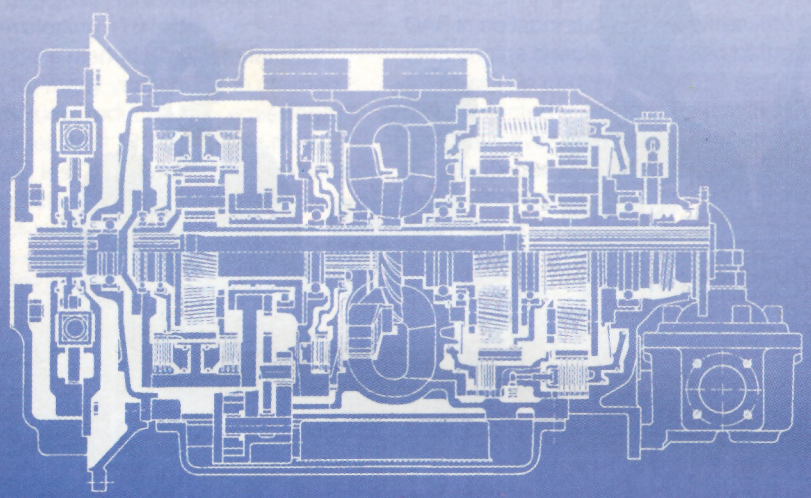

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Any operator near mains gas would clearly be in line, or perhaps on line, for a CNG fleet. The biggest in the country is Southampton Citybus, and md Ian Phillips (right) knows the pros and cons

the ecobus edge

THE decision by Southampton Citybus to devote time, money and resources to adding 16 CNG buses to its fleet was not taken lightly.

The buses themselves, six with converted engines and a further 10 with Cummins, purpose-built CNG power units, were only half of the equation. For the massive bank of compressors and long line of refuelling bays needed to provide the infrastructure needed space.

Citybus did, of course, have a leg up. Part of the driving force behind the

project was go-ahead authority Hampshire County Council, which not only co-funded the project but gave it a marketing thrust. Co-sponsors included the Department of Transport, European Commission and British Gas Natural Gas Vehicles.

Not least in the partnership was British Gas which, spotting its opportunity as a long-term investment in gas sales, installed the refuelling facility with no fewer than 20 slow-fill points and two fast-fill. The result is an impressive operation which has provided the UK's biggest experiment with CNG buses.

"I've no regrets so far," said Mr Phillips. "The industry has got to look at ways of reducing pollution, and we can't all stand around waiting to see how it goes. I think there is a lot to be learned about CNG engines and, in particular, fuel storage. It's still a learning curve."

But, according to Mr Phillips, there's been more gain than pain: "We had electrical teething problems with the first three buses, which were conversions by Hendy, but they've long been solved. Their main problem has been range... we specified four instead of six cylinders, which gives us just 120 miles per fill.

"Hot weather last year caused some electrics to fail, but I'm not anticipating a repeat performance."

The benefit may have shown in the increased revenue, but image has as much bearing on profit as cheapness: "I'm sure our increased turnover has been a combination of a number of things but I can say that, instead of appearing to have to run old buses - which we do - we have a way of correcting that image," says Mr Phillips.

> "I've no regrets so far. The industry has got to look at ways of reducing pollution, and we can't all stand around waiting to see how it goes"

The choice of CNG over LPG was made for several reasons, not least of which was a substantial gas main running right next to the favoured refuelling compressor area.

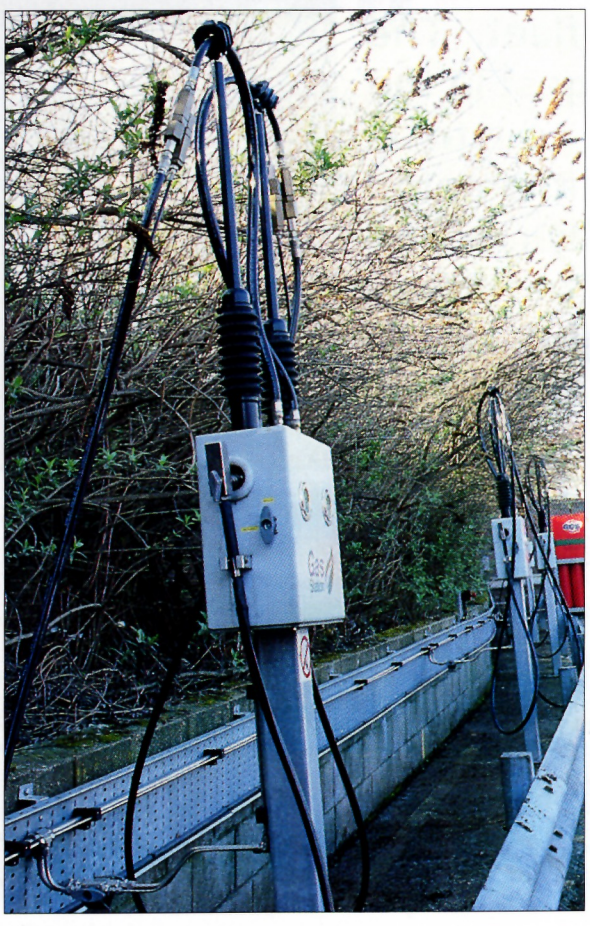
"While I know LPG has a good track record, there was still the worry in my mind that leaks were clearly a possibility and, being heavier than air, LPG could create a safety problem. CNG just floats away into the atmosphere."

Nor was Mr Phillips worried about a supply monopoly, particularly as diesel prices are regularly hiked by US demand. He says world demand will influence any fuel price and it is not in British Gas' interests to do anything other than nurture its fledgling sideline... as it already is.

The bottom line is the bottom line, however, and, despite his pleasant experience of buying gas, the resultant vehicles have been 15 per cent more expensive to run than parallel diesel vehicles: "I'm not worried about that because current Treasury policy suggests more diesel duty rises, reduced rebate, and stable gas prices. The 15 per cent could disappear in the next 12 months."

Southampton Citybus recently had some Japanese visitors and Mr Phillips was left brochures from Nissan and Isuzu, both showing their, almost identical, CNG buses - the addition of air-conditioning on the roof necessitating underfloor CNG tanks, and the Isuzu using a 240 bhp V8 engine. For Mr Phillips and for the industry, it should confirm that CNG is currently the focus of a great deal of interest and investment.

The fast-fill pumps also fuel the mayor's car...



...but 20 slow-fill points are for the buses

Garage staff training for gas is a consideration

it won't cost the earth

It's all too easy to get carried along on the enthusiasm without looking at the cost. What's the premium for gas fuel, asks Mark Williams?

ONE of the greatest problems in planning for fuel cost is that the Chancellor has more effect on the price than the market.

Nobody who was involved would forget the period in the seventies when OPEC hijacked oil and sent prices soaring. Yet little is said about the effective doubling of the Derv price to the bus industry by Ken Clarke (and predecessors) and the oil refiners... and all within the last five years.

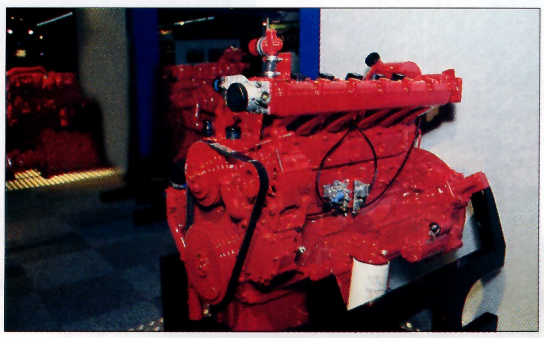
Which makes any attempt to make a permanent record of comparison fairly futile. By the time you read this, the election will have passed, and the incumbent chancellor will be ready to manoeuvre tax policy or fuel duty rebate to pay the bills. What is for certain is that the price will not reflect the value of public transport to the environment, nor will the proceeds feed the transport system.

We've taken a look at a mixture of fact and theory to work out where LPG and diesel stand in a cost comparison. It is based on real tests in The Netherlands using a 2.5-litre commercial vehicle in diesel and LPG forms but, in an effort to reflect bus use, the example has been

scaled up by a factor of three. As yet, full tests of LPG buses in UK operating conditions are inconclusive; in any case, do you compare LPG conversion, or purpose-built LPG engines? Whose operating conditions do you choose?

There is also the initial premium for LPG. Refuelling facilities are sometimes underwritten by the gas supplier. If you do your own maintenance, you need around £2,000-worth of gas detectors. And then there's the extra cost of the bus.

The jury's still out on a typical gas bus premium but, once the orders flow, the price difference looks like being between £10,000 and £15,000. This can be offset with grants and the newly-announced Powershift programme, run by the Energy Savings Trust (see supplement page 4). But, of course, these costs will vary with every bus bought.



LPG engines promise less wear

Similarly, the cost of maintenance is hard to fix. The likelihood is that the whole-life cost of gas engines will match or undercut diesel units, since the reduced carbon emissions mean reduced oil contamination and cylinder wear. Meanwhile, the biggest problem will be retraining fitters for spark-ignition engines.

Which leaves the fuel cost, plain and simple. In this example, we have chosen a typical city bus mileage, and taken into account fuel duty rebate in the cost of the fuels.

At present, just under half the cost of diesel can be claimed in rebate, while just over 21p per kg of LPG duty is reclaimable, which amounts to around 11p on a 25p per litre cost.

From the experience of operators in Holland and Ensign Bus' experience of its L10 conversions, LPG engines appear to consume about just under twice as much liquid fuel by volume, per mile of service. Ensign admits teething troubles, now solved, may have influenced its figures, so we've settled on LPG consumption of 6 mpg against diesel's 10 mpg.

Annual running cost comparison

	Diesel	LPG
Annual mileage	60,000	60,000
Miles/gallon	10	6
Fuel used	6,000 gallons	10,000 gallons
Litre cost	25.5p	14p
Annual fuel cost (Litre cost x 4.546 x Fuel used)	£6,955	£6,364

CNG fuel costs, on a per-mile basis, seem more difficult to fix. FirstBus' experience in Bristol has been something of a curate's egg, and it reports fuel costs up to 30 per cent higher, with the acceptance that a few good months could cure that. Ian Phillips, at Southampton Citybus (see supplement pages 15 and 16) reckons on a 15 per cent premium... and the two companies may be able to pool figures soon if the proposed acquisition of Citybus goes ahead.

But the story for gas fuels so far is that, to provide a cleaner environment, they rely heavily on the will of the Chancellor and precisely how that reflects on the taxation regime. So far, the signs are very, very good for gas. ■

contacts listing

Engines/vehicles

Hendy Power, School Lane, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh SO53 4LY, tel 01703 254744

Power Torque Engineering, Herald Way, Binley, Coventry CV3 2RQ, tel 01203 635757

Hughes DAF, Lodge Garage, Whitehall Road West, Gomersal, Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire BD19 4BJ, tel 01274 681144

Guide Friday, Units 6/7 Maybrook Industrial Estate, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 0BT, tel 01789 293831

Hybrid Vehicle Ltd, MBCL, PO Box 132, Alfreston, Polegate, East Sussex BN26 5TZ

Cummins Engine Company, 46 - 50 Coombe Road, New Malden, Surrey KT3 4QL, tel 0181 949 6171

Government

The Energy Savings Trust (Powershift), 11 - 12 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1E 6LB, tel 0171 931 8401

Air Quality Division, Department of the Environment, Room B364, Romney House, 43 Marsham Street, London SW1

Vehicle Standards and Engineering Division, Department of Transport, Room C19/08, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1

Associations

The LP Gas Association, Alma House, Alma Road, Reigate, Surrey RH2 0AZ, tel 01737 224700

Natural Gas Vehicle Association, 11 Berkeley Street, Mayfair, London W1X 6BUtel 0171 388 7598

Gas suppliers/Installations

British Gas Trading, 17 London Road, Staines, Middx TW18 4AE, tel 01784 645011

Calor Autoblend, Calor Group, Appleton Park, Datchet, Slough SL3 9JG, tel 01753 540000

CompAir Reavell, PO Box 44, Ranelagh Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP2 0AE, tel 01473 602222

Shell Gas Ltd, Farndale Road, Staveley, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S43 3YN, tel 01246 479100

Additives

Highspeed Lubricants, Parkway House, Worth Way, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD12 5LD, tel 01535 611103

Triple E UK, Lyon Industrial Estate, Moss Road, Kearsley, Bolton BL4 8TR, tel 01204 708090

Thermwatch, Bridge House, Fishergate, Norwich NR3 1UF, tel 01603 760255

Catalysts

Engine Control Systems, Unit 8, Berkshire Business Centre, Berkshire Drive, Thatcham, Berks RG19 4EW, tel 01635 871776

Johnson Matthey Catalytic Systems, Orchard Road, Royston, Herts SG8 5HE, tel 01763 253000

Eminox Ltd, North Warren Road, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 2TU, tel 01427 810088

Thermwatch, Bridge House, Fishergate, Norwich NR3 1UF, tel 01603 760255

Advanced Diesels

Mobil Oil, Mobil House, 500 - 600 Witan Gate, Central Milton Keynes MK9 1ES, tel 01908 853000

Greenergy, 1 Adam Street, London WC2N 6AN, tel 0171 976 1655

Shell Advanced Fuels and Lubricants, Shell UK, Shell-Mex House, The Strand, London WC2R 0DX, tel 0500 221101

Total Oil GB, Charles House, 17 - 23 Vaughan Road, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 4DY, tel 01582 765321

smoke signals

Most bus operators and all coach operators are stuck with diesel as their primary fuel. But there's diesel, and there's ultra-low sulphur diesel... no comparison, say the suppliers

THE London Transport Buses subsidy of ultra-low sulphur diesel throughout the service system is much more than altruistic political correctness.

A year-long trial of the fuel - produced by Total, Shell, Mobil and Greenergy among others - demonstrated some startling advantages. For example, Euro I vehicles filled with the modern diesel produced the same or lower emissions than a Euro II counterpart on standard diesel.

Drivers reported more lively engines, and manufacturers claim a performance/economy advantage of up to three per cent. From the passenger's viewpoint, the reduction in visible smoke emissions is obvious.

The figures are even more convincing; Shell says its Advanced XL gives 75 per cent reduction in sulphur emissions, and particulates down 18 per cent; Mobil says use of its Cleanerburn in every diesel vehicle would remove 7,495 tonnes of particulate emissions every year; and Greenergy's City Diesel used in the LT tests would eliminate 189 tonnes of soot a year from London if used throughout the fleet.

LT Buses favours the linking of the fuel with catalysts, such as those from Johnson Matthey/Eminox and Engine Control Systems, to refine emissions still further; carbon monoxide down 46 per cent, hydrocarbons down 80 per cent, nitrous oxides 11 per cent and those deadly particulates down a further 12 per cent.

The take-up of the offer from London's operators has been impressive, with many simply awaiting the end of existing fuel contracts so they can make the switch. At last count, Cowie Leaside, Metroline, Cowie South London, Invictaway, London United, Cowie Grey-Green, London General and CentreWest were all slowly switching over.

But there is a need to get the issue, as it relates to coaches and buses, clearly into focus. While 87 per cent of all transport-related particulate emissions come from trucks and PSVs, only a fifth of that total can be attributed to PSVs, and only a fifth of ALL particulates in the atmosphere are transport emissions... the rest being pollens, dust and industrial contaminants, including power station smoke. Given that background, it is hard to see what can actually be achieved by moving to advanced diesels.

Perhaps the biggest bonus of the lot is so obvious it is being missed by operators; the 'green' advantage may not be the environmental impact but the sales power of environmental friendliness. Switching to any greener fuel could easily replace the lowfloor as the most useful marketing tool this decade to increase ridership on the bus... and the coach.

For, although the need to reduce city pollution is of overriding importance, going green is one more area in which the coach industry could so easily take the lead, not only by saying so across the rear screen, but by giving out an obvious, smoke-free signal to the people it needs to convince - the motorist - when overtaking the smoke-belching culprit, the HGV. That extra 2p a litre may not be a high price to pay after all...

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Many coach operators are celebrating their 50th anniversary this year as well. So we thought, how about taking a ride down memory lane and looking at some of those vehicles that you used to know and love, or maybe hate? However, we're not going to tell you what they are. We don't want you to have it too easy. So, you've got to get those brain cells fired up and working and tell us what the vehicles are.

Get your answers in the post or on the fax and, who knows, you might be the winner of a bottle of whisky, which you can then save to the next bank holiday ready for a less taxing exercise. CBW

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Complete this form by naming all nine coaches on this page.
We want to know the name of the body and its manufacturer.
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The sender of the first all-correct form drawn from the hat will win a bottle of whisky.
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Answers:

1) .....

2) .....

3) .....

4) .....

5) .....

6) .....

7) .....

8) .....

9) .....

Name:.....

Address:.....

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Postcode: ..... **Tel:** .....

Post or fax completed form to: Mike Morgan, Editor, *CBW*, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough, PE1 1DS, fax 01733 467154, to arrive no later than 14 May 1997.

Time for a change?

Mobil says that using its synthetic oil allows operators such as Trent Buses to extend their vehicles' oil change periods

Mike Morgan looks at the claimed benefits of synthetic engine oil

YOU can change the oil and save money. That's the claim from oil giant Mobil and its arguments have convinced supermarket chain Safeway to run all 550 vehicles in its delivery fleet on Mobil's fully-synthetic Delvac 1 SHC engine oil.

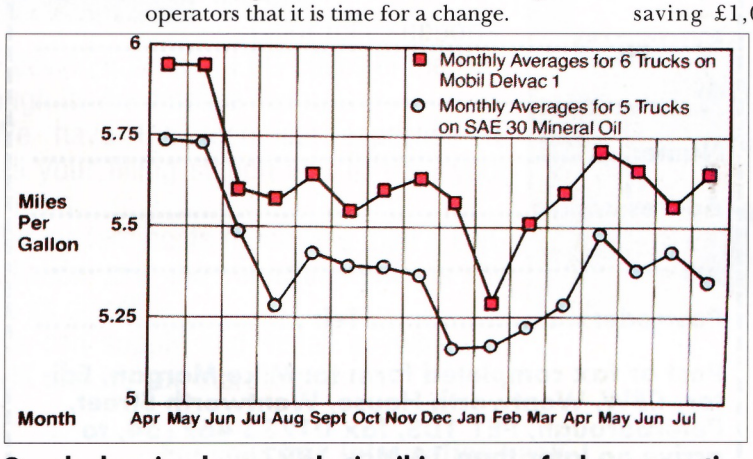
Safeway calculates that fully synthetic engine oil will save fuel and forecasts that, based on 48p per litre commercial diesel price, it will save £1 million a year on its fuel bill. Using Mobil synthetic allows operators to extend oil change periods. Safeway is changing to annual drain for engine oil and to three years for gearbox and rear axle.

Field trials show that, at extremes of temperature, Mobil Delvac 1 SHC retains its viscosity. In very hot and very cold conditions, the oil remains fluid enough to allow fast flow around the engine ensuring minimised friction and, therefore, minimal engine wear.

CBW was shown oil samples to compare fully synthetic with commercially available mineral oils. At minus 18 degrees C the synthetic was still fluid and the mineral virtually solid. When tested in extreme heat the synthetic retained its viscosity.

Fully synthetic lubricants are very different from mineral and semi-synthetic alternatives said Barry Smith, manager Mobil commercial vehicle lubricants. Both are made from the same crude oil, but mineral oils are refined directly. Synthetics are chemically built from the purest elements of the refining process. The synthetic was first marketed in the UK in 1973 and has always been more expensive. But the cost savings available are convincing fleet operators that it is time for a change.

Synthetic first marketed in UK in '73


6
5.75
5.5
5.25
5
Miles Per Gallon
Month
Monthly Averages for 6 Trucks on Mobil Delvac 1
Monthly Averages for 5 Trucks on SAE 30 Mineral Oil
Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul

Graph showing how synthetic oil improves fuel consumption

The range includes Mobil Delvac 1 SHC diesel engine oil; Mobilube 1 SHC heavy duty gear oil; and, Mobil ATF SHC transmission fluid for automatic transmissions. Among the converts is Trent Buses. Continued premature breakdown of the transmission fluid in ZF Ecomat gearboxes fitted to Optare Deltas was resulting in a £12,000 rebuild programme.

Change to Mobil ATF SHC significantly reduced oil consumption, retained shift quality, and reduced clutch slip. Trent now has extended component life and adopted a longer drain period approved by ZF.

And it has experienced reduced fuel consumption.

In a 100,000 km test on Volvo B10M-chassied Plaxton Premiere Expressliners, Trent has experienced better fuel efficiency by changing to Mobil for engine, gearbox and final drive. An improvement of 3.5 per cent is saving £1,000 per vehicle per year and increased oil drain intervals is saving a further £100 per vehicle. Mercedes-Benz 709D minibuses operated by Buckinghamshire Road Car changed to Mobil for engine and driveline. Average mpg improved from 14.4mpg to 15.45mpg.

Changing to synthetic engine oil cut fuel consumption for two operators in Germany — two per cent for HHA and 3.2 per cent for Freiberg. The Iveco citybus fleet in Tigullio, Italy, saved 4.2 per cent.

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68182DU

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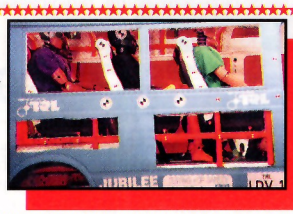

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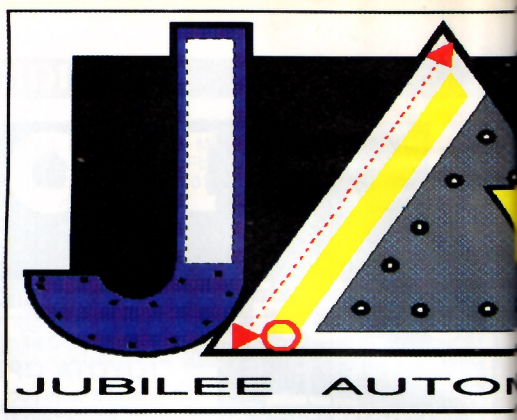

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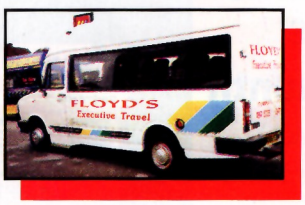

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1987 D Bedford YNT Duple 320, 53 reclining seats, Exterior White & Blue, Interior Brown Moquette, Driver Operated Door, Side Locker, Rack Locker, Rear Window, Tinted Windows, Brown Gangway and Crew Seat. **Ref: 0854**

1995 M Volvo B10M Plaxton Premiere 350, 46 reclining seats, Exterior White, Interior Grey Moquette, Exhaust Brake, PA, Microphone, Front Wheel Discs, Driver Operated Door, ABS, Pannier Locker, Aircraft Locker, Tinted Windows, Double Glazing, Curtains, Continental Door, Hot & Cold Water, Tea/Coffee Machine, Servery, Fridge, Drinks Trays on Seats, Magazine Nets, Armrests, Crew Seat, Black Gangway, Toilet and Rapide Spec – National Express. **Ref: 0887**

1995 M Volvo B10M Jonckheere 45, 49/53 reclining seats, Exterior White, Interior Multi Coloured Moquette, Radio, PA, Cassette, Wheel Discs, Driver Operated Door, ABS, Exhaust Brake, Side Locker, Toilet, Double Glazing, Tinted Windows, Blinds, Continental Door and Crew Seat. **Ref: 0119**

1994 L Volvo B10M Jonckheere Deauville 45L Highliner, 49 reclining seats, Exterior Green, Orange, Yellow and Brown, Interior Multi Coloured Moquette, Radio, PA, Cassette, Wheel Discs, Driver Operated Door, ABS, Exhaust Brake, Side Locker, Toilet, Double Glazing, Tinted Windows, Curtains, Continental Door, Crew Seat, Fridge and Tea Machine. **Ref: 0135**

1993 K Volvo B10M Premiere 350, 49/53 reclining seats, Exterior White, Interior Grey Moquette, Radio, PA, Cassette, Front Wheel Discs, Driver Operated Door, ABS, Exhaust Brake, Side Locker, Toilet, Double Glazing, Webasto, Tinted Windows, Curtains, Continental Door, Crew Seat. **Ref: 6769**

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1991 H Leyland Tiger 290 Plaxton Paramount 3500, 51/53 seats, Exterior White & Red, Interior Grey Moquette, Radio, PA, Microphone, Cassette, Front Wheel Discs, Driver Operated Door, Drivers' Fan, Courier Fan, Pannier Locker, Rack Locker, Rear Window, Tinted Windows, Curtains, Continental Door, Armrests, Crew Seat and Toilet. **Ref: 0288**

1990 G Leyland Tiger (Cummins 290) Paramount 3500, 49 reclining seats, Exterior White, Interior Grey Striped Moquette, Radio, PA, Stereo, Driver Operated Door, Telma, Side Locker, Toilet, Double Glazing, Tinted Windows, Webasto, Curtains, Continental Door, Crew Seats, Crew Compartment, Soft Trim, Aircraft Lockers and Wiring for TV/Video. **Ref: 6574**

1989 F DAF 230MB Plaxton Paramount 3500, 49 reclining seats, Exterior Grey & Cream, Interior Grey & Red Moquette, Radio, PA, Microphone, Cassette, Wheel Discs, Driver Operated Door, Drivers Fan, Tinted Windows, Double Glazing, Curtains, Continental Door, Hot & Cold Water, Seat Belts, Crew Seat and Toilet. **Ref: 0161**

1993 K Dennis Javelin Premiere 320, 53 reclining seats, Exterior Red & Cream, Interior Brown Striped Moquette, Radio, PA, Cassette, Wheel Discs, Driver Operated Door, Telma, Side Locker, Double Glazing, Tinted Windows, Curtains, Continental Door and Crew Seat. **Ref: 7028**

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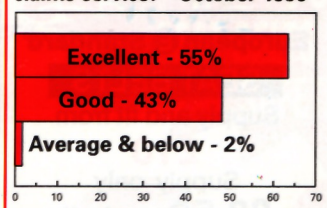

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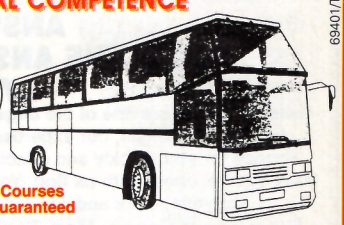

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To operators of local bus services within Greater London. The above regulations put a duty on local authorities to consult with operators of 'local' bus services on any traffic regulation order which is likely to affect the operation of a local bus service as defined under Section 2 of the Transport Act 1985.

If you operate a local bus service within any of the London Boroughs please will you write to Mr David Martin, Environmental Services, London Borough of Bromley, Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH with a contact name and address, stating which London Borough/s you serve or pass through. Bromley will then advise all the other London Boroughs of the operators involved. Route details and numbers are not required – it is sufficient just to indicate which Boroughs you serve. It would be helpful if you would inform Bromley of the types of local service you run – LT procured London conventional bus, LT procured Mobility bus, service provided under a Section 3(2) agreement other than above, service provided under Section 37 London local service licence, all these to include cross-county boundary services as well as those contained within Greater London.

This request will be renewed annually so that databases can be kept up to date. If you have any queries on what is required please ring Peter Bradburn, London Borough of Barnet on 0181-359 4352.

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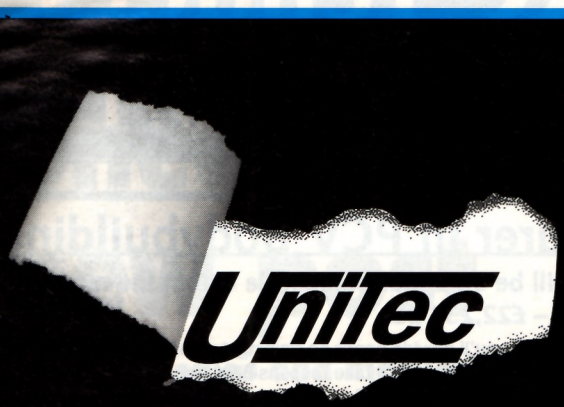

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Appointments & Tenders

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Vacancy for Manager, Stagecoach Swindon & District

Following the resignation of the present post holder, a vacancy has arisen for a Manager of this 44 vehicle depot. Reporting to the Managing Director, you will be responsible for all operational and commercial aspects of this depot (a division of Stagecoach Cheltenham & Gloucester) employing around 100 staff, including preparation and implementation of budgets. Close co-operation with an engineering colleague is also necessary to ensure the overall success of the unit.

Applicants will need to display sound financial awareness, together with a commercial flair and the ability to manage and motivate staff.

A competitive salary is offered together with the provision of a company car and other benefits.

Applications including full curriculum vitae and explanation of why you will be successful in the post, should be made to:

Mr A W Dyer, Managing Director,
STAGECOACH CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER,
3/4 Bath Street, Cheltenham, Glos GL50 1YE

Closing date for applications is 16th May 1997

Stagecoach
CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER

88668

Lecturer in PCV Bodybuilding

Salary will be on a four point scale within the range £12,264 – £22,230 pa.

In this busy role, you'll provide hands-on training, teach theory on our national apprentice training scheme and take responsibility for updating, multi-skilling and assessing bus company staff.

With this in mind, it is essential that you have wide-ranging experience, suitable qualifications, good communication skills – and enjoy working as part of a small team.

For further details and an application form, please contact: The Personnel Department, Tile Hill College, Tile Hill Lane, Coventry CV4 9SU. Telephone (01203) 293183 (Direct Line). Closing date: Monday 19th May 1997.

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Tile Hill College is an equal opportunity employer – and all appointments are made solely on merit.

Tile Hill College COVENTRY

FAX YOUR COPY OVER NOW ON 01733 467154

CYNGOR BWRDEISDREF SIROL – BLAENAU GWENT – COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

GWENT JOINT PASSENGER TRANSPORT UNIT
TRANSPORT ACT 1985

TENDERS FOR SUBSIDISED LOCAL BUS SERVICES

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, acting as the lead authority for the Gwent Joint Passenger Transport Unit is currently updating the list of passenger transport operators interested in receiving invitations to tender for the provision of subsidised local bus services within the unit's area, covering the following local authorities:

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Newport County Borough Council
Monmouthshire County Council
Torfaen County Borough Council

If you are interested in receiving future invitations to tender, and you are not already on our list, please contact:

Mr Andrew Carter,
Head of Passenger Transport
Gwent Joint Passenger Transport Unit
Department of Engineering
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Baldwin House, Victoria, Ebbw Vale NP3 6ED.
Telephone: Ebbw Vale (01495) 355444

Please note that inclusion on this list does not cover contracts specifically for the conveyancer of school children for which separate arrangements are made by the respective Directors of Education of the four authorities listed above.

Details of previous tender decisions are available on request and will be sent automatically to operators receiving general invitations to tender.

D. K. JONES
COUNTY BOROUGH SECRETARY

Municipal Offices,
Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale NP3 6XB.

April, 1997

69995/TEN

Say you saw it in CBW

▼ Coach

Shearings: new post

Central sales and marketing

by Mark Williams

CHRIS Barnes, Shearings former commercial director, is to head a new central sales and marketing department.

The new administration, with 75 staff, will co-ordinate the Wigan operator's sales from promotion to final sale. The change has involved merging its UK and Ireland, and themed breaks departments, and putting former themed breaks manager Melvyn Morley in the UK commercial directorship, reflecting annual sales of themed breaks up from 10,000 to 70,000 in three years.

"Higher sales and a shift towards longer duration hotel stays meant greater liaison with the UK department was already happening, particularly in hotel contracting and coach fleet utilisation," said Mr Barnes.

"By integrating the two departments, we can better utilise key assets such as coaches and hotels, and so improve our margins."

Ipswich achievers: front (l to r): Rocky Pratt, Russell Fenn, John Noble, Mayor Philip Smart, Peter Groom, traffic manager Colin Pipe, md Malcolm Robson. Back: Reg Mouser, Trevor Bloomfield

▼ Bus

Driver recognised

IPSWICH Buses' driver Russell Fenn collected a Life Times Achievement Award from the Mayor, Philip Smart, in a town hall ceremony which also recognised long service and NVQs.

Mr Fenn has worked for an unbroken 31 years for the company and driven accident free for 28 years around the Suffolk town. He has also represented his trade union during that time. Other long service winners were Trevor Bloomfield (29 years), Reg Mouser (26), Rocky Pratt (26), John Noble (25), and Peter Groom (20).

NVQs were presented to the first seven drivers so far to have achieved the standard.

▼ Coach

Guernsey op scoops 18 awards

ISLAND Coachways on Guernsey scooped no fewer than 18 safety awards in the island's Road Operators' Safety Council scheme.

Six collected a diploma for having a clean sheet in their first year of driving and 10 got a second-level diploma for two years' accident-free service.

First-year winners were: Mark Amies, Barry Carre, Eddie Hockey, Rob Murray-Cook and Pat Ferbrache.

Second-year diplomas went to: Steve Carre, Tony de la Mare, John Drillot, Dave Grundy, Steve Guilbert, Sandra Le Pavoux, Peter Martel, Chad Pryce, Mark White and Walter Margison.

CBW Coach and Bus Week
The PSV industry's news weekly

SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

Coach and Bus Week is the news weekly for coach and bus operators. *Transit* provides vital analysis of, and information on, the UK public transport scene every fortnight. Together they make an unbeatable and invaluable package. All annual subscription rates include delivery by first class post. It is important to fill out all parts of this form. NB: *Transit* is not available on subscription without *Coach and Bus Week.*

Payment (please tick as appropriate)

Coach and Bus Week

	1 year	2 years	3 years
UK	£49.00	£88.00	£125.00
Eire/Europe	1 year £92.00.	Airmail	1 year £124.00

Transit (Existing Coach and Bus Week Subscribers)

	1 year	2 years	3 years
UK	£72.00	£129.00	£183.00
Eire/Europe	1 year £115.00.	Airmail	1 year £147.00

Coach and Bus Week and Transit (New Subscribers)

	1 year	2 years	3 years
UK	£121.00	£217.00	£308.00
Eire/Europe	1 year £164.00.	Airmail	1 year £196.00

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

YOUR COMPANY DETAILS

1. What is your primary job title? (Tick one only)

Owner/Director ☐01
Senior/General Manager ☐02
Engineering/Service Manager ☐03
Other (please specify) ☐04

2. What is your company's main business function?

Bus Operator ☐01
Coach Operator ☐05
Coach & Bus Operator ☐02
Local Government ☐03
Other (please specify) ☐04

3. How many vehicles does your company own/operate? (Tick all that apply)

	Buses	Coaches
1-5	☐01	☐10
6-10	☐02	☐11
11-15	☐03	☐12
16-25	☐04	☐13
26-39	☐05	☐14
40-100	☐06	☐15
101-400	☐07	☐16
401-1000	☐08	☐17
1000+	☐09	☐18

4. Do you have responsibility for the recommendation/ purchase and/or specification of the following? (Tick all that apply)

	Pur	Spec	Rec
Vehicles	☐01	☐12	☐23
Parts/Spares	☐02	☐13	☐24
Oil/Fuel	☐03	☐14	☐25
Breakdown	☐04	☐15	☐26
Insurance/Finance	☐05	☐16	☐27
Fuel Cards	☐06	☐17	☐28
Training	☐07	☐18	☐29
Venue/Attraction Tickets	☐08	☐19	☐30
Ferry Crossing	☐09	☐20	☐31
Hotel Bookings	☐10	☐21	☐32
Theatre Tickets	☐11	☐22	☐33
Other (please specify)			☐34

5. What type of work does your company undertake? (Tick all that apply)

Private Hire ☐01
Day Excursions ☐02
British Tours ☐03
European Tours ☐04
Local Government Contracts ☐05
Emergency/Breakdown Services ☐06

By cheque: I enclose a cheque for £ .....made payable to EMAP Business Communications.

By credit card: I authorise you to debit my Mastercard/VISA/ DinersClub/Amex card for the amount of £ .....

Expiry date ...../.....

By invoice: Please invoice my company ☐

Card number: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Signed .....

Name .....

Job Title .....

Company .....

Address .....

.....

Postcode..... Tel: .....

Return to: Kerry Young, *Coach and Bus Week,* Subscription Department, EMAP Automotive Ltd., Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough PE1 1DS
or phone 01733 467051 *today*

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(Luck had nothing to do with it.)

Why gamble when you can be guaranteed a sure winner? Lucketts have backed the Optimo midi coaches for ten years to complement their range of luxury coaches. Its new 4.1 turbo charged engines prevent false starts, and revised transmission ratios mean improved fuel economy, so you can go the full distance. Wider seats all with seat belts prevent riders from saddle sores, even when faced with the most difficult hurdles. For more detailed information on this odds-on-favourite, please telephone Steve Prime on 01737 768 585. And be guaranteed a sure winner.

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For more information please contact Steve Prime, Coach Sales Manager, Toyota (GB) Ltd., The Quadrangle, Redhill, Surrey PH1 1PX. Tel. 01737 768 585. Erringtons of Evington, Leicester. Tel. 0116 273 0421. Regal Coach Sales, Glasgow. Tel. 0141 776 3268. AD Coach Sales, Devon. Tel. 01884 860767. Salvador Caetano (UK) Ltd., Heather. Tel. 01530 263 333.

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